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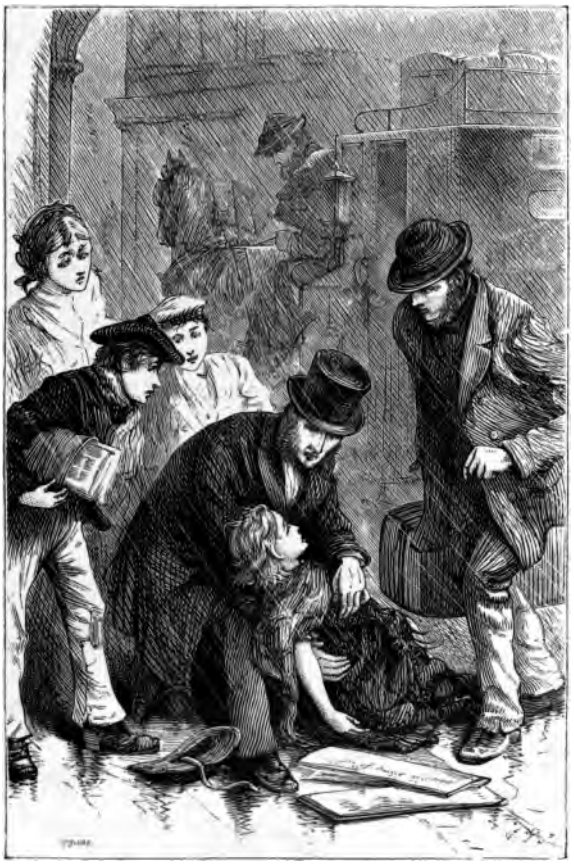

"The gentleman, with a face of extreme concern, immediately gave his portmanteau to a porter who was standing by, and lifted the little sufferer from the ground." *Page 2.*

THE

FLOWER OF THE GRASSMARKET;

OR,

Sought and Saved.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"TIM'S TROUBLES."

WITH FIVE FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS.

BIBLIOTHECA
JAN 79
BODLEIANA

London:
HODDER AND STOUGHTON,
27, PATERNOSTER ROW.

MDCCCLXXVIII.

251. e. 861.

Butler & Tanner,
The Selwood Printing Works,
Frome, and London.

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CHAPTER I.

THE BUD OF THE FLOWER.

ONLY a small wearied wayfarer on the well-worn highway of life—only a very little girl, standing with bare feet and tattered garments on the steps of the Edinburgh General Post-office, holding the evening papers tightly in her thin arms, and calling out in a very young voice indeed, "*Edinburgh Evening News*, sir?"

The rain was pelting down, and the cold autumn wind was blowing keenly, even for that fair northern city, which is no stranger to a sharp air. The child's few clothes were soaking with rain, and under the little dark plaid shawl, which was her only decent garment, she hid the precious papers to prevent them from getting as wet as herself.

Some few of the newsboys and bigger girls jostled her about as she came between them, but more often they spoke kindly to her, and told her to "rin awa and tak' shelter up the steps."

"But I'll no sell the papers then, ye ken," said the little business-woman. Yet she retreated more and more often to the Post-office, for her little arms were blue and mottled with the cold, her poor bare feet were aching, and there were fewer and fewer customers; as the gentlemen, having posted their letters, went off in tramcars, omnibuses, cabs, and carriages to their homes, or hurried away on foot to the pleasant shelter that awaited them.

The child was on the pavement holding out a paper to a passer-by. A gentleman, carrying a small portmanteau, hastily ran up the steps with a letter, and then ran down

again still faster to catch his train, which was all but due, at the Waverley station. He glanced up at the clock on the Record Office opposite to make sure of the time, and thus was ignorant of the presence of the little child. He knocked against her in his eager hurry, pushed her down, and the wheel of a cab, coming along at a swift pace over North Bridge, went over the prostrate little form, and left an ugly mark on the small tartan shawl. A scream, a rush, a quickly-gathered crowd. The occurrence had taken place in little more than a minute.

The gentleman, with a face of extreme concern, immediately gave his portmanteau to a porter who was standing by, lifted the little sufferer from the ground, and carried her tenderly in his arms to the nearest chemist's shop, followed by a policeman, the man with his luggage, and several of the crowd. Looking down at the child as he bore her along—she was very light and small, not more than five years old, and very thin and delicate for that—he marked what a sweet little face she had, and how naturally the pretty fair hair waved and curled. The soft delicacy of the complexion at the best of times scarcely deepened into pink on the oval cheeks; now the child was quite pale, and even the lips were almost white from the fright and the fainting fit into which she had fallen.

The stranger's heart smote him with agony that he had been—albeit so accidentally—the cause of all this suffering to her. Gazing at her in her fragile loveliness, which nothing could hide, he thought of a fair child like her, who had lain in his arms long ago, and nestled to his heart, and turned her sweet face up to his confidingly when they were children together.

Arrived at the chemist's, and restoratives having been given her, the little newsgirl opened a pair of bright blue eyes, pathetic in their beauty, and looked at the gentleman,

and was so patient and gentle at all they did for her, that his eyes filled with tears. Outside the shop a little group of newsvending "fraternity"—boys and girls—stood, ready to give information about the young sufferer, and to receive tidings of her state. The policeman, who had entered the shop, called one of these inside, a sharp-faced little laddie, with uncommonly dirty feet and legs, very ragged garments, an old Scotch cap upon his bunch of unkempt and very fair locks, large wide-open grey eyes and wonderfully thickly-freckled skin.

"Do ye ken the wee lassie?" asked the chemist's assistant, looking from the boy to the child.

"Ou aye," said the boy, smiling at the little girl, and stooping to kiss her lips, now somewhat regaining their ruddy colour; "she is just wee Jessie Macdonald that sells the papers. She'll no sell them again a long while, I'm thinkin'."

"And she lives where?" questioned the gentleman.

"Down in the Grassmarket, number thirty-twa, Fraser's Close."

"Has she any father and mother?"

"She has a mither, but her fayther's awa."

"Away?" questioned the gentleman.

"Ou aye, he's been dead lang syne."

"What does her mother do to get money?"

"She just does what she can," replied the boy.

"The wee lassie will be best off in the Children's Hospital," said the chemist's assistant; "her mother will have no proper accommodation for her. I'm afraid her arm is broken; the sooner you take her there, sir, the better. She will have the best attention and every kindness shown her."

Leaving his portmanteau with the chemist, and requesting that a cab might be called for him, the gentleman soon drove off to the hospital. On the way he called at 32,

Fraser's Close, Grassmarket, for little Jessie Macdonald's mother, and learned, to his ill-concealed horror, that the day before, at the Central Police Court, Euphemia Macdonald had been sentenced to a five-shilling fine or five days' imprisonment for riotous and disorderly conduct, and that, not having any money, she had been taken to Calton Gaol.

This intelligence the men and women, Irish and Scotch, who gathered round the cab from the neighbouring lodging-houses poured into his ears with great volubility.

"Euphemia!" repeated the gentleman. "But I forget—it is a common enough name in Scotland."

All of these poor people were concerned for little Jessie, and showed the utmost commiseration and compassion for the owner of the beautiful little face that rested in semi-unconsciousness against the shoulder of her new friend. Sometimes, afterwards, he recalled that scene, as if it had been a picture he had gazed upon, without being one of its principal figures.

Round the Grassmarket itself there seem even yet to linger echoes of the noble words that were spoken for God, when martyred spirits, tortured in the fires there kindled, gave glorious witness for the truth ere they left time for eternity. Those tall old houses, very dingy, very dirty now, and justly doomed, many of them, by sanitary commissioners, what thrilling histories they could tell, were but their stones permitted to cry out and declare the faithful past to faithless man!

On this hallowed ground of centuries gone by, what a motley group arrayed itself, pouring forth from the crowded lodgings of Biddy O'Hallaghan and the equally thronged rival establishment of Donald MacKay! Irish labourers—some of them on the eve of returning to the Emerald Isle after harvesting in Scotland, others habitual residents in Edinburgh—rough, red-faced, red-haired, coarse-featured,

but with redeeming brightness and quickness of eye and tongue; young Irish matrons, with shawls over their heads, and with bare feet, their children all around and about them in every variety of size, shape, temper, and dress—all, speaking tenderly of little Jessie, were eagerly pushing and thronging round the cab to peep at the little ones' whilom companion and playfellow, now so strangely still. Tall, gaunt, grizzled, cautious Scotchmen, wretched and demoralised as many of them appeared, took off their old tattered bonnets, and looked with softened countenances on the injured child; Scotchwomen, anxious and careworn, with bare feet, and high cheek-bones, and sharp features, relaxed somewhat as they gazed.

"It's meself that's raal sorry for the pretty little craythur," said an Irishman at the door of the cab; "shure and she's just the little flower of the Grassmarket—and that's what I have called her many's the time when I see her playin' wid the other children, the darlints. And shure, yer honour, ye'll not begrudge us a shillin' to drink her good health, and long life to yer honour, in a dhrap o' the craythur?"

"I cannot. Drive on, cabman," said the gentleman.

"Dhrive on, Jehu—by the powers, dhrive on!" cried the Irishman, good-humouredly, falling back neither annoyed nor abashed at the refusal.

The cab went on now till it stopped at the hospital gate. The gate led into a small garden, only separated from that pleasant promenade of Edinburgh, "The Meadows," by a light palisade, and hence enjoying the full benefit of their greenness and fine air.

Descending from the cab while the cabman rang the bell, the gentleman, still carrying little Jessie, sought entrance at the gate. The little patient was presently admitted, and doctors, quickly summoned, were soon bending kindly and

carefully over her small form to discover the nature of the accident. Her arm had been broken, and there were severe bruises on her side and chest. The evidently delicate constitution of the little one, her fragile form, her almost attenuated frame, bespeaking months of privation, exposure, and neglect, made her speedy recovery so much the more improbable.

"But everything shall be done for her that is possible," said one of the surgeons; and the matron echoed his words, while the nurse of the bright and sunny ward in which little Jessie was placed, and to whose care she was consigned, won by her pleasant face and voice and manner the immediate confidence and good opinion of the stranger.

"My name," he said, as he rose to leave, "is Edward Burnard, and I live at Somerleigh."

He laid his card on the table of the matron's parlour as he spoke, and on the card he placed two five-pound notes.

"I am desirous," he said, "of placing this to my poor little friend's account, and, if you will kindly let me hear how she progresses, I will send you further sums from time to time. I desire that the hospital funds may not suffer through my carelessness."

He had evidently taken the share he had had in causing the child suffering so much to heart, and looked so careworn and troubled in countenance—that the matron could not help wishing to cheer and comfort him.

"I have no doubt the little lassie will soon rally, sir, and I am quite sure she will have better food and attention here than she has had for a long time by her appearance. Perhaps good will be permitted to come to her from out this apparent evil—her accident may raise up friends for her whom she might otherwise not have had."

"I trust so," replied Mr. Burnard; "but it is a terrible

thing to maim a little child, however accidentally; and I cannot conceal from myself that I was blamably careless in hurrying as I did through a crowded thoroughfare." He glanced at his watch as he spoke. "I have already missed one train," he said, while an apology for a smile rested on his pleasant face; "I must take care not to miss another, though I shall have to wait till morning."

"You are leaving for England, sir?"

"Yes, and ought to have been many miles towards home by this." He took out five shillings from his purse. "Will you buy sweets and toys for poor little Jessie with these, as she may want or fancy them?" he said, and then he hurried away.

But, before he had left the child upstairs in her comfortable bed, he had bent over the small sweet face and kissed her, and breathed "God bless her" as tenderly as if she had been his own child. And the "wee lassie" had answered his good-bye with her sweet blue eyes fixed upon him, and a faint smile upon her lips.

Mr. Burnard retraced his steps to the Post-office, but this time he took care not to run against any little newsvendors. He had now to send a telegraphic message. It ran as follows:—

"Edward Burnard, Edinburgh, to Annie Burnard, Rose Villa, Blackfriars Road, Somerleigh.—Have accidentally missed the night express. Cannot reach home till tomorrow evening. Very grieved to disappoint you."

Then he called at the chemist's for his portmanteau, sought his hotel, and, early as it was, retired to bed, that he might be the more ready for his journey. To bed, but not to sleep, save fitfully. He dreamed disagreeable dreams. A party of city arabs pelted him with stones, and shouted, "Ye hae kilt wee Jessie, the Flower o' the Grassmarket!"

Rushing from them he saw a young and fair woman

weeping over an open telegram, and, as he turned from her reproachful eyes when she raised her head, he heard the noise of the works at his foundry in Somerleigh close to his ear. He turned restlessly, but the noise went on, thump, thump, ceaselessly, remorselessly, till a voice cried out, "Five o'clock, sir!" and he rubbed his eyes and awoke.

The morning was fair after the heavy rain of the preceding day, and Mr. Burnard was soon equipped for his journey. A hasty cup of coffee—he was too anxious to stay to eat or drink much—and he was away. At the station too soon, he took his seat in the train for the south with a feeling of satisfaction, and was not sorry when the huge engine began to move, and to bear him towards home.

CHAPTER II.

AN INTERIOR AND AN INTERRUPTION.

A SNUG cosy parlour in a pleasant English home, the gaslight falling through frosted glass globes softly down on the rosewood piano, and on the lady who was seated at it turning over her music, falling also on that other lady who was bending over her work at the round table immediately below the gaselier. Vases of autumn flowers—geraniums, dahlias, verbenas, clematis, and late roses—tastefully arranged, decorated table and mantelpiece. Bright-hued flowers, too, were in the hands of the Parian Hebe and Ceres standing upon the dark leather brackets on either side of the fireplace. A small bookcase, full of choice volumes, carefully kept, but often used, stood in one recess; a what-not, filled with pretty articles, home and foreign in manufacture and design, occupied the other. Several good prints and photographs, framed, hung on the walls. Amongst them were some likenesses. Opposite to one the lady at work was seated, and towards it she not unfrequently looked smilingly. The picture represented the somewhat homely yet pleasant features, the honest true eyes, and the kindly mouth of Edward Burnard. He looked a man for a woman to trust, with much of sterling goodness in his earnest expression, and little thought of self in the easy, almost careless attitude.

"Harry Duncan's been at me again to-day, Annie," said the young lady on the music-stool, turning herself round on it till she faced the lady at the table. Her countenance wore a puzzled, almost an annoyed expression, yet it was very bright for all that.

"At you, Maggie; what about?"

"The same old story."

"I don't understand." Annie's glance sought the picture involuntarily.

"You might, I should think," returned the first speaker, balancing herself on the stool—"about that dreadful old school, and my duty."

"What!—to be a teacher?"

"Oh, Annie, don't be so provoking! Haven't I told you again and again all about it? You know exactly what Harry Duncan means, and what he says; if you don't, I'll tell you once more." The younger lady hereupon assumed a demure, sober expression, and, in a solemn voice, said: "My dear Miss Griffiths, you are now twenty-one years of age; it is time you made a decision to work for the good of your fellows. Come into our school, and I will undertake to provide you a class."

"I don't believe he said those words, or looked like that, naughty Maggie," said Annie.

"My dear, I assure you he did say those words, and a great deal more. Now I am quite determined that no one shall force me into Sunday-school work; nor am I at all sure that any one ought to undertake such work who is not a professor of religion. I will never profess to have what I have not, and it is of no use whatever for me to say that I find my highest pleasure in religious subjects. It would be mere cant if I did say it, for I do not enjoy them above everything."

"Of course, until you honestly do, you cannot say so, or act as if you did, Maggie. But many good people think—and I think so too, but please don't understand me to say that I am good—that they could not shut the Sunday-school door against any person who was willing to become a teacher and to try to do the children some good, merely because that person did not profess religion."

"And others think quite contrariwise; and *I* am of that number," rejoined Maggie. "How ridiculous to pretend to teach a child religious subjects and not know them oneself! Why, Annie, if I offered to teach Peter French, and had only learnt a few letters, you would say I was crazy!"

"I don't think I should if you would *learn with him.* How often the very best and wisest of masters have had to teach their pupils by puzzling out problems with them! The childlike spirit is absolutely necessary to those who would learn of Christ. Sitting down with the little ones, waiting for His blessing to alight on them, the brightness of the glory of the Sun of Righteousness will in part shine on your own head, Maggie. At the banquets spread by the great and hospitable Master of Assemblies, there is always bread enough and to spare."

"It is all real to you, Annie," said Maggie, looking, with eyes that were for the moment almost serious, at the sweet face of her sister, now glowing with joy at the thoughts her own words had brought to her mind; "how could I direct others when I do not know the way?"

"'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life,' Christ said, dear Maggie. Jesus is so near to us that, directly we honestly turn to Him, we find Him not far off, but waiting to show Himself, waiting for admission."

"Then you would advise me to try, Annie?" interrogated Maggie, after a rather long pause, in which her hand strayed very softly over a few notes of the rich full-toned piano before her.

"Certainly I should."

"I suppose I could teach them a few facts in Bible history, which might be useful to them and do them good. But I wonder, for my own part, that superintendents and teachers of Sunday-schools ever want to introduce persons

as teachers who, though they may have a reverence for religion, cannot profess with any truth to be religious. You know, Annie, I believe in having things done in the best way. I don't believe in entrusting the care of babies to ignorant nurses, or in sending children to learn of masters and mistresses who are but little wiser than their pupils. I should have thought, my dear Annie, that you would heartily agree with me in these opinions."

"You are not fairly stating the case, Maggie. I would not trust a baby to a nursemaid ignorant of the way to hold a child or to amuse him, or to do some of the simplest offices he might require, and which were absolutely necessary for his comfort. But I might be inclined to try even an inexperienced nurse who had not made up her mind to shut her eyes for ever, and remain ignorant of all she had to learn. And don't you know, Maggie, that in teaching and learning it often happens that he who has merely taught what to him is a dead language, has opened a gateway into a paradise of beauty for the enraptured student, who thenceforth pursues his way amidst the flowers and gems of this new realm of joy? A child may learn French, for instance, of a woman whose only use for that tongue is to read deleterious novels written in it; but for him it may be the unlocking of the wealth of all the greatest and most admirable writers that France has produced. Words of the Bible, taught as mere words by the teacher, may be a revelation to the scholar. All teaching, whether secular or religious, if it is true instruction, has hidden in it the germs of far greater consequences than we can ever realise, much less see. The different minds upon which those germs may fall, the vast influence which may possibly hereafter appertain to the children who are around us, looking to us for their daily mental bread—these considerations make the work of a teacher a very solemn and grand one. But, when we speak

of Sunday-school teaching, the responsibility and grandeur are both much increased. Then, truly, the little group gathered around us, week after week, look to us for their spiritual bread; and our hands should be like those of the disciples, when, by their means, Jesus distributed the loaves and fishes to the weary, hungry multitude of men, women, and children in the desert place. We should be the almoners of God's bounty—the father's elder children, handing the food to the younger ones, choosing from the storehouse of good things the morsels best fitted for tender babes."

"How can I be an elder child in relation to my class, if I am not a child at all?" asked Maggie, her bright face clouded.

"How can you help being a child—albeit a wayward child, perchance, as yet—in the great family of God, Maggie?"

"I wish I saw it all as plainly as you see it, Annie."

"Anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see, dearest Maggie."

Silence ensued, and was unbroken for some minutes, when a loud double rap at the hall-door made both Annie and Maggie start and exchange glances. The door of the parlour opened almost directly afterwards, and a servant entered with a telegram, which she handed to her mistress. Tearing it open with trembling fingers, Annie Burnard read the words which her husband had written for her only a short while before in the Edinburgh Post-office.

"What is it, Annie?"

"He is not coming." The young wife's lip quivered.

"Why not?" Maggie left the piano and went to her sister's side.

"He has accidentally missed the train."

"Is that all?" asked Maggie, gaily. "Why, I thought he was ill, at least—you looked so miserable."

Annie bent her head over the paper on which the telegram had been written, and burst into tears.

"Was I horridly unsympathetic, Annie?" asked Maggie.

Annie did not answer at first; presently she lifted her pretty tear-stained face, and said in a vexed tone, "I did not think he would disappoint me. How can we keep to-morrow without him?"

"And the boys are coming—your class, Annie?"

"Of course they are, and his own class of young men too. We both thought it would be such a pleasant way to keep up our wedding-day anniversary; and now this spoils the whole thing. He can't come till night; and what shall I do with them all? The first anniversary too"—Annie was crying again; "and he has been away three whole weeks. Oh, Edward!"

"The fact is," said Maggie, looking comically serious, "matrimony is a bad sort of thing altogether. I mean to avoid it myself. Warned by the fate of her dearly loved sister, Mrs. Edward Burnard, the prudent Maggie Griffiths never thought of love. Doesn't that sound touching, my dear Annie?"

Annie could not forbear a smile.

"Don't be so silly, Maggie. Oh, I wish he had said what detains him! I trust there is nothing amiss. It seems so strange, after fixing everything so particularly, and sending his own invitation to his Bible class."

> "The best-laid schemes o' mice and men
> Gang aft agley,"

quoted Maggie.

CHAPTER III.

HARRY DUNCAN.

ANNIE BURNARD was inhospitable enough to wish very sincerely that her appointed visitors for the next day had not been coming. Puzzled and troubled at her husband's prolonged absence, she tried to translate the few words of the telegram into the whole history of his unexpected delay. The more she thought it over, particularly in the quiet, dark, solemn hours of night, the more troubled she became, and the less inclination of heart she felt for entertaining the party of young men and boys which in a few hours would be assembled at her house.

To Harry Duncan, Annie turned her thoughts for efficient help in carrying out her husband's plans for the interest and amusement of the party. This Mr. Duncan was a "character," as people say when a man or woman steps out of the ordinary course of action and chooses a line of life altogether different from what might have been expected. He had been brought up in affluence, with the career of a surgeon before him, and had resided for some time with an eminent practitioner in order to study under his guidance, when by one rude sweep the fortune amassed by his father for himself and his young sisters was utterly lost, through the failure of a bank in which that father had most implicitly trusted. The catastrophe broke his father's heart; and at the age of twenty Harry Duncan found himself the only support of his widowed mother and the four young girls who called him brother.

Harry had no aptitude whatever for business in the ordinary sense of the word, but he thought of Charles

Lamb, who was a favourite character with him, and went about to seek a desk to write at and a clerk's salary. Mr. Burnard, admiring the brave way in which the young medical student had accepted his new position, offered to give him employment, and Harry Duncan at once thankfully accepted it.

This was now ten years ago, during which time Harry had made a comfortable home for his family; and few knew, fewer still remembered, how he had sacrificed all his natural predilections and early habits to achieve that result. What made the crown of his devotion was his own innocence of his heroism and self-denial. He generally considered himself dreadfully stupid, and not worth the two hundred a year that had been paid to him so regularly for the last five years, his earnings up to that time not having exceeded one hundred and fifty pounds per annum. He was now in comparatively easy circumstances; for Rhoda and Mary, two of his sisters, were respectably married, and one of the others was a governess away from home earning a handsome salary.

His mother and "the girls," as he affectionately called them, were devotedly fond of Harry, though they sometimes laughed at his eccentricities. He was doubtless eccentric, and his leisure was occupied with employments quite uncommon to many mercantile clerks. He was an amateur city missionary, a zealous Sunday-school teacher in a ragged-school, and he preached very often, in the summer time in the open air, in the winter in cottages and mission halls. His honest simple-heartedness was beautiful. If he had any intellectual defect, it was that he was wanting in that sharp business capacity which makes men clever in money matters. Though he was very accurate in office work, any one might have cheated Harry Duncan with his private purse. But his poetic imagination was fine, his talent for

public speaking not small, his ideality large, and his knowledge of books wonderful, seeing that he spent so much of his leisure amongst beings of inferior mental culture to his own. Every one confided in Harry Duncan, some smiled at his doings, many laughed at his queer heedlessness in dress, but all who knew him knew that he was a man who, with faithful and single heart, acted up to his convictions of duty.

Harry Duncan had faults, or he would not have been a living man, but he only could give a long list of them. One thing grieved him sorely—it was to see young strong men and women hiding away their talents. He could never rest till he had pleaded with such to work in the vineyard of the Lord. Maggie had been very often expostulated with. The beautiful bright girl, endowed with rich gifts innumerable, yet refused to use one of them for the great Giver. It was wonderful how many young folk the indefatigable Harry Duncan had induced to become teachers and preachers of righteousness—how many he had won over to work with him in the school, in the mission hall, in tract distribution, in Bible-reading to the sick, the incompetent, and the aged. But talk after talk with Maggie had had no such result. In her long visits to her sister, always of many weeks' duration, he had had many opportunities of seeing her, and he longed more every time they met that this fair girl should not waste her whole life in useless, inexpressibly useless, adorning of her pretty person, and practising her many and varied accomplishments.

Annie and Maggie were orphans, and had been brought up by their uncle and aunt, rather gay but extremely kind-hearted people, living at Sandycoombe, about thirty miles from Somerleigh. It was natural, now that Annie was settled, that her sister should determine to pass a very great deal of her time with her; indeed, a cosy parlour and

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spacious bedroom were put at her disposal in her brother-in-law's house, and designated "Miss Griffiths's rooms." On hearing of this determination Harry Duncan had again and again attempted to persuade her to begin Sunday-school work, but without avail. Harry was of middle height, rather spare in figure, had a "nice" face rather than a handsome one—a face full of kindliness, charity, and hope—a good forehead indicating poetic talent; honest, clear, expressive dark eyes; an abundance of curly brown hair and whiskers. His mouth was an agreeable one, quickly expressive of many and varied emotions, like the eyes above it.

"Here is a note for you, Harry," said his sister May, as he entered the parlour of his cosy home; "I think it is from Mrs. Burnard."

Harry Duncan stooped to kiss May when she handed him the note, for she was lying on her little couch, as she had lain for so many years of her suffering young life.

"Yes, it is from Mrs. Burnard," said Harry, taking it; and, opening the envelope, he unfolded the pretty sheet of tinted scented paper and read aloud:

"Wednesday Morning.

"Dear Mr. Duncan,—I had a telegram last evening to say that Mr. Burnard cannot reach home till to-night. I know he has asked you to help us to entertain our visitors this afternoon; and, as I am thus deprived of his help, will you be so very kind as to call and see me on your way to the office, that we may arrange matters for their pleasure?—Yours sincerely,

"ANNIE BURNARD."

"What party are they to have?" asked May.

"I think I told you, dear," explained her brother, "that Mr. and Mrs. Burnard had determined on this, the first anniversary of their wedding-day, to invite the Bible-class which he teaches and her class of boys to a social evening. It is very awkward for her that Mr. Burnard has not re-

turned. I am only too glad that she thinks I can be of use to her."

"What success have you had with Miss Griffiths lately? Will she teach?"

A shadow passed over Harry Duncan's face.

"No success at all, I believe, May; it is one of those many things about which we must exercise patience."

The brother's and sister's eyes met with a meaning look, while a tender smile played over the two earnest faces. At that moment an elderly lady in widow's weeds made her appearance at the door, and Harry hastened to greet his mother with a loving "good morning" and a hearty kiss. When breakfast began May's couch was wheeled over to the table by Harry, and her fickle appetite was tempted by dainty morsels which her brother's hands set on her plate.

This, Harry Duncan's youngest sister, was the one between whom and himself there was the most entire sympathy. People said they were alike; and it was true, great as was the contrast between Harry's healthy complexion and May's white skin and delicately-tinged cheeks. From the time when they had been left fatherless, and the little girl, the pet of all the family, and especially of her dead father, had crept to Harry's arms for protection and care, in the loneliness and terror of her first great sorrow, up to the present hour, the union of this brother and sister had become more and more indissoluble and precious. May had been always fragile, sensitive, and weak, and when she was just emerging into girlhood, hip disease had manifested itself and had condemned her to a life spent between couch and bed. When the case was pronounced hopeless by the eminent doctors whom Harry summoned to her bedside, and the young girl insisted on knowing their verdict, it was Harry who had the moral courage to tell her. It was Harry alone who had known of the fierce, passionate struggle be-

tween the newborn powers and instincts of May's dawning womanhood and that fatal decree of permanent ill-health.

For weeks, months, even years, May's rebellion had lasted, during which time she had been irritable, often peevish and sullen, always difficult to please. Her mother and sisters pitied her too much to chide her or even wonder at her. Should they not have felt the same if they had been condemned to spend their lives on a bed and a couch, with only the few drives that their limited means would allow to break the monotony of life? So the good mother, and Rhoda, and Mary, and Fanny had all been schooled in patience themselves by May's fitfulness and waywardness, and made excuses for her again and again when they were tempted to be cross.

Harry alone ventured to combat the strong character of his sister, the determined will that had risen up in anger against the God who afflicted her, and to call this resentment of hers by its right name. For the first two years of her illness he gave up every Sunday evening to May. He relinquished the various works he had begun amongst the poor, to devote himself to what he saw clearly was his still plainer duty. But he took care to provide substitutes who should carry on those other works, not perhaps in exactly the same pattern as he had intended, but equally as usefully and as wisely. He was too truly humble-minded to believe that he was the only man who could do things properly. We are wonderfully conceited, even in those good deeds which we undertake for the glory of God. How anxious we feel about "our" school, "our" Bible-class, the services in "our" mission room, unless we can personally be there to attend to them, when of course all will go on in the right way, and we shall be satisfied! How little we realise that God works by "many or by few," as it pleases Him; that He can mould and prepare any of His children for any work

in which He employs them! How constantly, for instance, we find the vacant places in the teachers' chairs in a Sunday-school, caused by death, by removal, by change of circumstances, filled up again, perhaps even more efficiently than before! How often we ask ourselves, in our want of faith, when some standard-bearer is removed, "*Who* can possibly take his place?" when perchance, at our very elbow, unperceived by us, but not by God, stands the man baptized by the Holy Spirit for this very post of honour! Still more ought we to be able to trust God to look after our own little field of labour, if duty points to us to leave it for a while, or even altogether—to feel certain that it shall not be uncared for by the God of the harvest. Albeit it is our privilege to introduce fresh workers into it, to whom we may commit our hopes and wishes, leaving them to form their own plans.

Many a time, on a holiday, by the glorious far-reaching sea at Sandycoombe, or lying on a hot day in rare idleness on the breezy downs near Somerleigh, Harry Duncan had listened to the solemn, continuous, never-ceasing beat of the waves upon the beach, or to the dull roar of traffic of the busy city, and had learned the lesson necessary to us all to learn, how little we are missed, how well the world gets on without us. The thought had nothing disagreeable in it to this earnest Christian soul. Rather was he glad to feel sure that the great battle of life, of right against wrong, was unceasing, whether he was in its midst or taking breath by repose; that the great Captain of our salvation had so vast an army that when one stepped aside another arose to take his place. Of course this truth, like all truth, has a reflex side; a man, if he would do all the good possible to him to accomplish, must work, in whatever field of public labour he adopts, with such intense earnestness as if he were the only one at work—with such glorious single-

heartedness that he will welcome all new comers on the scene, and cease not to labour till death overtakes him or victory is won—unless, indeed, as in Harry's own case, some private work is given him to do by the Master Himself.

That private work, every Sabbath evening for two years, Harry Duncan had found by May's bedside. It was *the* evening of the week to the sick girl, for she had him all to herself. Through every season of the year, whatever else Harry denied himself, he could not forego the pleasure of procuring fresh flowers for May's Sunday. Late on Saturday he visited a certain old florist, by name Joe Bedwin, and purchased a basketful of lovely flowers. These were duly refreshed with a sprinkling of water on his arrival at home. The next morning May's delighted eyes feasted on their loveliness, when her brother brought her his Sabbath gift, and she amused herself for a weary hour or so by arranging them in various bowls and vases. All day they were placed about her, and in the evening, when Harry and she settled for their weekly talk, God's love spoke through the fragrant or bright-hued blossoms to His chastened child.

May could open her heart to Harry as she could not to any other being. All the wild desperate words which girls of deep feeling so often astonish their friends by pouring out in fierce unrestrained eloquence; all the doubts, perplexities, and hard thoughts which her sickness had engendered, and especially all the complaints against the permanent character of her ailment, Harry listened to with the utmost patience. May used to say playfully and lovingly afterwards, that Harry could never have so much trouble again, even with the roughest children, as he had in that private Sabbath school of his, in which he was both superintendent and teacher, in which there was only one class, and only one weak wayward rebel scholar.

Though Harry spoke very little, yet he thought much of

those two years when May and he plunged hand in hand into thickets of useless controversy, whither the girl's doubts had led her, or wandered over the barren land of cold mistrust and unbelief, May, like a youthful Job, battling piteously in her weakness against the strong arm that held her, and unable to learn the text which was a sheet-anchor all the while to her brother, "He doth not afflict *willingly*, nor grieve the children of men."

But by-and-by, like "dew of Hermon," God's peace gently stole into the heart of May Duncan. The agonies of a life of weakness and pain, the terrors of a premature death, the renunciation of those dreams of love and happiness which had dawned upon her youthful, sensitive, feminine nature in all their exquisite sweetness and purity and beauty—all these she was enabled to meditate upon calmly, for the light above the cross shone upon her steep path, the "veil of the temple was rent in twain," and she beheld with rapture the glory of the mercy-seat, and of Him who sat thereon. She had wrestled like Jacob "till break of day," and now the day had dawned—now her feet were on the first round of the celestial ladder, and the shining ones were directing her upwards and onwards.

She could not have told exactly how this wondrous change was brought about. She believed it began one evening when her brother cut away with ruthless hand—a hand like that of a skilful surgeon—every excuse she made for herself, every defiant word towards God. At all events, May was spiritually healed, and the teacher and pupil of this select Sabbath school rejoiced together at the goodness of their Creator and the love of their Saviour. Ever since, May had been Harry's greatest helper.

"A young girl need not be idle, dearest, because she lies on a sick bed all day long, or is only able to be removed to a couch for change. You can help me if you will, May."

Harry had said this to his sister, she had asked wonderingly, "How, Harry?" and he had answered:—

"By preparing my Sunday-school lessons, and giving me all your thoughts about them; by writing for me to any of my scholars who are absent; and by-and-by, if you should grow a little stronger, May, I shall get you some work for yourself."

In time May Duncan's labours on her couch would have shamed many an active healthy woman. Not only was she the joy and comfort of her mother and brother, but she was actively engaged in teaching. Surely those who "come out of great tribulation" themselves, and emerge on the heavenward side, are wonderfully fitted by their deep experience for comforting others. At all events, Harry believed this; and on Sunday evenings, before he went to his own work in the children's service at the ragged-school, or accompanied his mother to her place of worship, he escorted two blind girls to his own home, to the pleasant flower-perfumed parlour in which his sister lay. These girls were each of them earning a comfortable living, till in the one case by accident, in the other by disease, the dreadful calamity of blindness fell upon them. They, like May herself years before, were now struggling out into the light of truth, into firm unshaken confidence in God's love, and May was helping them.

Later on, in the afternoons of her Sabbaths, a class of young servant-girls came to May, and they had such pleasant times. These girls could not get out till after "dinner-things were put away," and would have disturbed the order of a Sabbath school by entering later than the rest. May had a wonderful influence over these young folks. A sweet charm, the "beauty of holiness," emanated from the fair teacher who lay upon her couch, robed in white, as she always was in summer, with flowers on her bosom, her soft brown hair waving around her, her young face lined with

suffering, but the dark grey eyes earnest and pleading, and exquisitely loving in expression as they shone upon her "children."

May had a large correspondence and intercourse to keep up with these girls of hers, as they moved away, or got married; and, what with writing to her own sisters, keeping the house accounts, doing the fancy work that her mother liked to see about in the various rooms, being that dear parent's loving and constant companion, as well as the confidant and adviser of her busy brother, May Duncan had no idle life.

CHAPTER IV.

AN EVENING PARTY.

"MOTHER, did you get my best shirt washed? Oh, that's right; thank you very much. Now I must get ready as soon as can be. Master was quite willing to let me have this afternoon. He said I hadn't bothered him in race-week, when it would have been awkward to spare me, and he was quite glad for me to have such a sensible holiday. That wasn't bad of him, was it, mother?"

The speaker, a ruddy, merry-faced, cheery-voiced errand-boy, was washing his face, and making it still ruddier and very shiny with abundance of soap, between the pauses in his long speech. His mother, a pleasant-looking woman, tall and comely, was ironing a shirt at a table—that very shirt about the cleanliness of which Frank's anxiety had been manifested. It looked as faultlessly white and nice as a practical washerwoman could make it; every fold was in its place in the snowy garment, and Frank's eyes glistened when at last he lifted his honest face from the large basin in which he had dipped it, and, wiping it on the rough towel in his hands, came to his mother's side to admire.

"You are a kind, dear mother," he said, in his off-hand, merry way, kissing her, and going back to the basin to perform his ablutions upon his arms. He rolled his shirt sleeves up to his shoulders and washed away with a will, but there were stains on his hands when he had done. "Hands won't look first-rate for tea in a parlour, mother; but I can't help it—they're as clean as clean. Hasn't Mrs. Burnard pretty little hands? My! they don't look as if she ever did a bit of work; and I don't believe she does.

But she's real good at teaching; there's no mistake about that. Do you know, mother, she seems up to everything? Knows all about what we boys do—tricks at marbles, and the temptations of apples and nuts, and all such things as that; it beats me how a woman gets to know 'em!"

Mrs. Drew laughed.

"And then there's the Bible," said Frank; "she knows it right through, right away from Genesis to Revelation. Can't tell how it's done."

"I don't think you must stay to talk much, Frank," said his mother. "On your invitation card it says five o'clock for tea, and it is nearly half-past four now; and you can't get to Mrs. Burnard's in less than twenty minutes. Rub away, my boy, and then take your shirt; you will find everything else ready on your bed. I shouldn't have left this to do till to-day, only I was obliged to go to Mrs. Jessop's yesterday, and this morning baby was very fretful."

"Where's the little kid now, mother?" asked Frank, affectionately.

"In at Mrs. Smith's; she said she'd mind it for me while I ironed your shirt."

"Much obliged to you and to her too," said Frank.

He hurried up the stairs, shirt in hand. On the bed of the tiny closet, called by courtesy his "room," lay his best suit of clothes, well brushed, and his last new necktie, of a deep crimson colour, the Christmas-box of his father nine months before, but which, having been worn only on Sundays and very special holidays, was still in pretty good preservation. There was also a button-hole bouquet for him of crimson geranium, for which his mother had expended one of her much-needed pennies. But then Frank was a good son, and Mrs. Drew was a good mother; she would have been sorry not to encourage her boy in every right amusement and pleasure. She would have been more

than repaid had she seen the tender smile that came to the hardy blithe face of Frank as his eyes lighted on the geranium. Presently he threw open his door, after sundry last touches with a brush at his refractory locks before the sixpenny looking-glass hanging on the wall, and emerged smart and bright in his best clothes, clean shirt, crimson tie, and crimson flower, with the happy thought that he had the best mother a boy ever had, and would try to deserve well of her too.

"I never thought of such a thing, mother," he said, as she surveyed him from head to foot with loving pride. "'Twas right down good of you. Good-bye;" and with another kiss, hardly staying even to hear her gratified "Well, Frank, you do look nice, my dear!" the boy was gone.

A clock in Rose Villa struck five exactly as Frank Drew knocked at the Burnards' door. When ushered in by the parlour-maid, he found quite a long row of hats and caps upon the pegs where he was asked to hang his own, and, entering the dining-room into which he was shown, he was at first somewhat abashed.

No one was there but Maggie Griffiths, looking, so far as expression went, the very embodiment of the spirit of fun and mischief. She was dressed in a bright shining silk of some shimmering gleaming colour—Frank could hardly have told what. Her beautiful dark hair was coiled round her fine head, and surmounted by a pearl comb; her gold chain and brooch and rings seemed all to sparkle in the afternoon sunshine, which, now that the sun was nearly setting, lighted up this room, which had a westerly aspect, with its deep golden light. The crimson carpet, the crimson curtains with their gilt rods, and the gilt frames of the pictures, all gave a warm bright colouring to the picture, in which Maggie Griffiths was the foreground figure.

On two long, narrow tables, ranged up and down the room, were spread teacups and saucers of white and gold, and an abundant supply of good things of all descriptions; this the boy's bright eyes managed to take in at one satisfied glance, after which his eyes fixed themselves again on Maggie, who now spoke.

"You are one of my sister's class, I suppose?"

This was Mrs. Burnard's sister, then; she wasn't much like her, Frank thought.

"Yes, miss." Frank wasn't quite sure whether "miss" or "ma'am" would be correct, she had so many rings on her pretty white hands it was difficult to find out at once, but he tried "miss" as probably correct, she looked so young.

"Then which would you prefer—to go into the garden, or into the study, where they are looking at pictures? Mrs. Burnard and Mr. Duncan, and all the rest, are in one of those two places."

"Mr. Duncan, miss?" Frank turned towards her with a pleasant smile.

"Yes, Mr. Duncan; do you know him?"

Frank shook his head slowly, with an appreciative twinkle of his honest eyes.

"Know Mr. Duncan, miss? Why, everybody knows Mr. Duncan; though Somerleigh is such a big place, I don't believe but what most people know Mr. Duncan as well as they know their own brothers; and what's more, they all love him, miss."

Maggie was curiously interested in Frank's words. In a great city like Somerleigh, was this Harry Duncan, whom she had hitherto viewed as a mere enthusiast about Sunday-schools, universally known and as universally esteemed? Maggie thought a great deal of the world's opinion, a good deal more than was compatible with her own peace of mind,

or even with her naturally independent disposition. Frank's words, therefore, though they were only the words of an errand-boy, influenced her more than she would have cared to acknowledge.

"Well, but what makes *you* care about Mr. Duncan?" she said to Frank. "And how do you know about him? He doesn't teach in your Sunday-school, does he?"

"Not where I goes to now," said Frank—"and that's where he said he thought I ought to go; but Mr. Duncan, miss, he's been the making of our family. I can't tell you all in a minute, but father wasn't always what he is now, and mother's had lots of trouble. She buried four of us between me and baby. But Mr. Duncan got hold of father, and now he's altogether different. He never gived him up, miss, till he were different, and now father goes to chapel regular, and I goes to the school belonging to it; but I used to be a ragged boy in the ragged-school, miss, and then Mr. Duncan he teached me, and I shall never love anybody else better than I loves him."

The boy's eyes were gleaming when he paused, and Maggie was watching him intently.

"Not but that I loves Mrs. Burnard," said Frank, suddenly remembering to whom he was speaking, "and always shall, next to Mr. Duncan."

"What are you saying about me, Frank?" said a pleasant voice, and, turning round quickly, both Maggie Griffiths and Frank Drew found that gentleman before them. "Mrs. Burnard has sent me to know if tea is ready, Miss Griffiths."

"Quite," replied Maggie. "I wondered when you were coming to take it."

"How this room is glorified!" said Harry, glancing round in admiration at the warm light of the sunset.

Maggie smiled; she was thinking how, from any other

man than Harry Duncan, she might have suspected a hidden compliment. What was it in him that forbade it? No sooner had she thought this than he added, with a winning smile—

"A glorious background to a most fair picture, Miss Griffiths; it is a wonderful privilege, a most solemn responsibility, to be a beautiful woman."

Maggie coloured; the compliment was spoiled, she said to herself, by the moralising.

"Even allowing the privilege, I don't see the responsibility," she said, coldly; "a woman who is beautiful—and she is a rare creature indeed—as she has had nothing to do with the creation of her beauty, can surely not be held responsible for it."

"Is it possible you can think so?" he asked in wonder. "Let me use a very homely illustration. Frank here, my honest young friend"—and he laid his hand lovingly on the boy's shoulder—"is an errand-boy at a grocer's; is he not responsible for the safe delivery of the goods he carries out, though he has had nothing to do with the making, or buying, or selling of them? Are we never responsible except the whole matter from beginning to end is our own choice?"

"I should think not," she answered; "we ought not to be."

"Your words would necessitate an argument commencing at the very beginning of things," he said, gravely; "indeed, if you are in sober earnest, we two could have no common ground at all for any argument, because you do not seem to grant that the very fact of our being here is a serious responsibility."

Frank listened, only half understanding their words, but comprehending that Mr. Duncan was grieved, and that Miss Griffiths seemed careless and thoughtless.

"I will tell Mrs. Burnard tea is ready," said Harry Duncan, breaking the somewhat awkward silence.

Presently the urns were placed upon the table, and the party came in from garden and study. For the next hour the two sisters, at their respective ends of the table, had full occupation—the one with her tea, the other with her coffee service; while the sandwiches, tea-cakes, currant buns, jams, fruit tarts, and other commodities, rapidly disappeared from the piled-up plates and dishes. From the youngest boy to the oldest man, all enjoyed the meal exceedingly, and it was impossible for their entertainers not to be well pleased at their evident pleasure. Annie Burnard began to feel that, in spite of her husband's lamented absence, the party, thanks especially to Harry Duncan, would be a great success. Amongst the guests were the wives of the married members of the Bible-class, and Annie's kind heart warmed to the careworn faces of some of them, now relaxed and smiling.

After tea had been removed, the servants brought in scarlet cloths, with which they covered the long tables, and then arranged on them a number of picture-books, stereoscopes and slides, albums full of views, draught and chess and backgammon boards, with their respective "men;" a number of mechanical toys—ducks, tops, mice, and singing birds—for the boys; together with puzzles of various forms and much intricacy. Then music was proposed by Mrs. Burnard, and, being very heartily seconded, she and Maggie played some lively pieces, and each sang a song; after which they had a hymn or two, in which all could join, and then the company settled down to various amusements. It was droll to see one man of particularly grave countenance, and almost middle age, who was employed as a moulder in Mr. Burnard's foundry, devote himself for a considerable part of the evening to a mechanical mouse,

setting it in motion dozens of times, with never-abated interest in the successful performance of its small achievements, and smiling with a pleased, satisfied smile as he timed its course by his large silver watch, and found it stopped regularly at the proper minute.

"That's as pretty a little contrivance, Mrs. Burnard," he said to Annie, as she paused beside him, "as I've seen for a long time. 'Tis wonderful, ma'am, to think how man can mimic his Maker, and give the look of so much nature to his inventions—isn't it?"

"It is very curious, Blight," she said; "indeed, I have known many of my lady friends thoroughly frightened at these little mice, when they have seen them for the first time, because they believed them to be real."

"You have, ma'am? Well, I shouldn't wonder; there is great illusiveness about art when it gets so near to nature as this."

"Yet, after all, how different it is," said Annie—"no power of independent motion whatever, only the motory power put into it by the mechanist."

"Excuse me, ma'am, but I like to think of that. Just as this little creature is dependent for all the measure of its power on the man who made it, so is that man himself dependent for motion, for action, for skill, for invention, for everything, on God."

"Yes, Blight, that is a nice thought—well?"

Annie added this interrogation, for she saw the man had more thoughts behind, and she wished him to utter them.

"Well, ma'am, I was thinking, if the brain of man is clever enough to contrive this ingenious little toy, what must God Himself be, to make all the millions of kinds of brains in the world now, and that have been in it from first to last, each with its different measure of power? Do you see, ma'am? Them's interesting thoughts."

"They are, indeed," said Annie, warmly; "and how far they may carry us, if we only begin to think of the different classes of brains—poets', philosophers', mechanicians', astronomers', inventors', historians', musicians', arithmeticians'—and then separate from these classes the men who have been as kings in their respective spheres. The thought conjures up more forms than I can pause to remember." And she smilingly left him to say a kind word somewhere else; while the moulder wound up the little mouse once more, and let it run upon the table; as again, watch in hand, he "timed him."

It was pleasing, too, to see the cluster of boys who gathered round the piano whenever the sisters, or Harry Duncan, who was a skilful performer, favoured the company. How they watched, these lads, with fascinated eyes, the black and white keys, the sharps and flats, which, obedient to the practised hands of the players, emitted their sweet sounds in such quick succession! Maggie entered into the spirit of the evening with such earnestness and good-tempered fun that she was the life of the whole party; and when, for the first time, quieter amusements somewhat flagged, she led the boys out into the hall, and indulged them with merry games, playing blind man's buff, "twirl the trencher," "oranges and lemons," with hearty and untiring zest. Frank Drew, as he afterwards told his mother, "never enjoyed himself so much in his life."

As a pleasant finish to the happy evening, Mr. Burnard arrived safe from his long journey, and came upon them in the hall whilst they were playing, when his young wife, all gay and smiling, rushed out to meet him from the dining-room, and there were glad welcomes from her, and from them all, to him, and from him to his guests back again, in happy confusion and mirth. He retreated, followed by Annie, for a little while, and then she returned to announce that, her

husband not being too tired, and quite determined to have his share in entertaining his dear friends, he would show a few of his beautiful Scripture pictures, by the aid of his magic lantern, in the attic. The attic, a large room over all the house, had been prepared for this exhibition; indeed, it was fitted up with forms like a small lecture-room, and kept in a constant state of readiness, for Mr. Burnard's lantern was his hobby, and to add to its efficiency, and to the beauty and variety of his slides, was a frequent occupation of his leisure moments.

The Bible-class and Sunday scholars knew their way up to the attic of Mr. Burnard's house, and nothing could exceed the attention they gave to the pictures thrown upon the sheet. These were Noah building an Altar to God, Rebekah at the Well, Moses in the Ark of Bulrushes, Christ blessing Little Children, Jesus feeding the Five Thousand, Christ the Good Shepherd, "Ecce Homo," The Descent from the Cross. Mr. Burnard also exhibited a number of familiar texts, as beautiful as familiar, in different colours, and wreathed with garlands of leaves and flowers. He ended with a picture which was a great favourite of his—Holman Hunt's "Light of the World"—and whilst it was before them he spoke a few loving words in the darkened room to those assembled. After entering into a somewhat particular description of the picture, that they might understand it better, he went on to say:—

"Most of you, both young and old, know well what it is to open the door to Christ. Some of you have felt—and I share this feeling with you—ashamed that you have so long kept the King of kings outside the door, with the dews falling upon Him. He came to us in such humble guise that we did not at first recognise Him, and others of us, alas! though we recognised Him, would not let Him in. But what I want you especially to note is the *patience* of

Jesus. In our busy every-day life, when we work away at our furnaces, at our machines, at our looms, at our counters, when we jostle against each other in our haste and hurry, how impatient we are with ourselves, and particularly with those about us! But here is the Monarch of the universe, the Creator of worlds, patiently waiting outside the door till He is let in by the youngest, the feeblest, the most despicable of His children. Sometimes we determine to do good to others. I, for instance, may make up my mind to use my influence with some gentleman of my acquaintance, to lead him to employ his ample means for the furtherance of some good object; or I may see a man, whom I long to find acting rightly, going quite the other way, and I go to his house to try to persuade him, out of pure love to him. The door is shut. I knock. The servant comes: 'Tell your master Mr. Burnard has called to see him.' She leaves me at the door. I wonder at her bad manners, and that she has not asked me in. She comes again: 'If you please, sir, master can't see you; he says he can't be troubled with company just now.' 'Well,' I answer, 'I will call again;' and I commend myself for my wondrous patience. I call again, but this time I am rudely rebuffed: 'Master does not want to see you at all, sir;' and the next time the door is slammed in my face. Do I bear these things patiently? Alas! no. But all this ungrateful conduct is as nothing compared to that which we have ourselves shown to Christ. He gave His life to save man from the heaviest penalty he could incur—the loss of heaven; and now He stands 'waiting to be gracious.' When an earthly prince knocks, we don't keep him waiting; we open wide the door. Sundays and week-days let us think in our hearts of our own terrible ingratitude and Christ's inexpressible patience. If such considerations do not make us say, 'Come in and sup with me, O Lord,' 'Abide with me,' I don't think anything

can. May we be all the better men and women and boys for coming together to-night, and for pausing in our innocent mirth and happiness to consider the subject of this wonderful production of heaven-bestowed genius."

After this the party came down to the brightly-lighted dining-room, and to the supper which had been laid upon the table while they were absent. A cold round of beef was at the top, which Mr. Burnard began to carve; a ham was at the bottom, to which Harry Duncan addressed himself. The ladies did duty on each side of the table with cups of chocolate and coffee; while every available space was occupied by apple and plum pies, cheese, custards, and what Frank afterwards described to his mother as "very shaky white stuff, which tasted dreadfully good." Oranges, nuts, apples, pears, sweets, and biscuits filled up every vacant place.

After supper, the simple reading of a passage from the Bible, and a short earnest prayer offered by Harry Duncan, closed the proceedings, and the company prepared to leave.

Presently the oldest member of the Bible-class was appointed to make a speech, presenting their hearty thanks to their kind host and hostess for a delightful evening. Nor were the boys behindhand. Frank Drew, being pushed forward by his companions, appeared in front of Mrs. Burnard's class, with a face that rivalled the original hue of the faded geranium in his button-hole, or even of his crimson tie itself, and said, as he advanced to Annie:—

"If you please, ma'am, all of us boys want me to say as how we're very much obliged, and wish for many happy returns——" There was a general laugh, when Frank paused, at the suggestive nature of his language; but the smiling and blushing boy managed to add, with considerable address, "Let me finish, boys—many happy returns of your wedding day, ma'am."

Annie thanked the dear scholars for their good wishes, so kindly expressed in their name by Frank Drew—thanked them as she stood just within the dining-room door, leaning on her husband's arm, her sweet happy face unshaded by a care, now that he had come back to her in safety. And then Frank spoke again :—

"Please, ma'am, we want to thank the other young lady too, for she was so jolly in the games."

Maggie laughed out merrily at this, and said she had had a very happy evening with them, and wished them all a very good night. And then Harry Duncan was thanked, and the grateful party, in a body, wended their way from the house, to separate to their homes as they entered the city. But they did not depart until Mr. Burnard had filled each boy's pocket from the plates of fruit, and distributed cakes and biscuits amongst the mothers, for the little children at home.

When they had all gone, and Mr. Duncan had chatted for a few minutes, and then taken his departure, and Maggie had retreated to her chamber, and night was brooding with its broad dark wings over the peaceful villa, Annie's first question was about the cause of her husband's detention, and she listened with extreme interest to his story of little Jessie, the "Flower of the Grassmarket."

"Why not have her here, and educate her and take care of her?" said Annie. "Poor little maiden, I hope that the accident will not leave any lasting effects—that she will not be an invalid for life, like dear May Duncan. What a sweet creature she is, Edward."

"I think so, Annie; I really know much less of Harry's family than I ought to know."

"I have been thinking," said Annie, "how much good May's society would do Maggie; but then we should never get Maggie to visit her—she would fancy it so dull. Do

you know, though, Edward, Harry has almost persuaded her to work in the ragged Sunday-school?"

A rather sleepy, "You don't say so, dear; I am very glad to hear that," warned Annie that she had talked enough for her husband's comfort, and that he had ample cause for showing fatigue, so she put off all other subjects till the morning.

CHAPTER V.

NEW WORK.

"I HAVE been talking to Annie, Mr. Duncan, and she seems to think, as you do, that there would not be any harm in my taking a class; so, if a teacher is really wanted at the ragged-school, I don't mind trying."

Maggie Griffiths and Harry Duncan had met upon the downs, where he was breathing a little fresh air after his mid-day dinner before going back to the office, and she was indulging in what she enjoyed occasionally, a solitary ramble. She had hardly paused for the ordinary greetings to be exchanged before she said this, and he held her hand while she spoke, almost inadvertently, in his great surprise. Relinquishing it very gently, he rejoined:—

"How glad I am to hear you say that, Miss Griffiths!"

"But you mustn't fancy I am any the more a professed Christian because of my offer. You know you said the other day that you would not shut the door of the Sunday-school against any one who was honestly willing to teach in it, even though they did not make any profession of religion."

"I know I did—and I still think so," said Harry, for she paused as if expecting him to repeat the assertion.

"Well, Annie thinks the same, and you are both very good, so I will venture. If any harm comes of it, it is your fault, mind," she said wilfully, pulling to pieces an unfortunate little tassel which hung from her glove, and which the wind soon wafted away from her over the downs.

"I will take the responsibility," Harry Duncan said, then added, "May I walk with you, Miss Griffiths, and tell you a few of the duties?"

"Oh dear!" cried Maggie, mischievously, shaking her head.

"May I explain to you a little about this particular Sunday-school in which you will begin to work?"

"Yes, if you like," cried Maggie, much as if she had made up her mind to take a dose of physic.

"Which would you prefer to teach—boys or girls?"

"Oh, boys!" said Maggie, emphatically. "There's more pleasure in teaching boys than girls. They're not afraid to say what they mean."

"I am sadly afraid you will find too little of the fear of man for your comfort amongst the whole of our children," observed Harry; "they are rather an unruly set. They are accustomed to but slight discipline at home, and what they have there is mostly corporal punishment, and, as Mr. Forrest and I dislike touching boys' bodies with sticks in the way of chastisement, they don't at first appreciate the benefit of the new dispensation."

"What do you inflict as an extreme penalty?" questioned Maggie.

"We dismiss them for a time, with leave to return when they are willing to confess their disobedience."

"And do they ever return and eat 'humble pie'?"

"Oh yes, often."

"*I* shouldn't," said Maggie.

Harry looked at her; she was very pretty in her saucy, daring, defiant mood. She went on:—

"If any one expelled me from a school, I should stay away till I was asked to return."

"If you were a naughty scholar I shouldn't ask you," said Harry, quite as firmly.

Their eyes met. It was impossible for them to look grave after such speeches, and they both laughed merrily. Somehow it seemed to Harry that a barrier between himself and

Maggie Griffiths had been broken down by that little episode. He felt that he understood better that proud wilful disposition which sometimes spoiled an otherwise noble nature. For her part, Maggie liked to come in contact with the calm determination that was in him.

"Go on," said she, when her lips had grown steady once more.

"We teach boys and girls in the same room—boys and girls who can't read in one room, boys and girls who can in the other; we classify them by the degree of knowledge that they possess, not by their sex."

"I would have all children so taught," said Maggie.

"So would I," rejoined Harry; "we do not, however, put boys and girls into the same class, although they are in the same room."

"You have a very large class, have you not?"

"I have twenty names on my book, with an average attendance of sixteen."

"Is that a high average?"

"Rather."

"And what do you teach them; have you regular lessons?"

"Yes; and the particular advantage of our all teaching from the same place is that if we have an address it is given upon the lesson for the day."

"I see," said Maggie; "the plan is good."

"I am afraid you will think the children very rude and wild."

"I expect ragged-school children to be so. And what must I do if the lesson does not hold out long enough?"

"You can interest them with a Bible story, or read to them, if you please, from some appropriate book, or ask them questions to discover what they know of the Bible."

"Perhaps I shall find that they know more than I do myself."

"Then teacher and class can change places."

Maggie looked half inclined to be offended, but Harry appeared so ignorant of intentional offence that she could not make up her mind as to the course to pursue; she only said:—

"You are very——" and then paused.

"Very what?" asked Harry Duncan, looking surprised.

"What shall I be if I tell you."

"Pray tell me."

"Blunt," she replied, abruptly.

He was silent for some minutes, till Maggie wondered at him, and looked in his face. This action on her part roused him.

"I have no doubt I am blunt," he said, humbly. "Thank you for telling me; it is the last thing I desire to be to any one, for I believe the truest Christian is also the truest gentleman."

"I had no idea you cared so much for all the little punctilios of society."

"I don't think I care for them at all," said Harry, smiling, and quite recovering his former bright manner; "but I do care very much for the command, 'Be courteous,' and I am not willing that any one should think me 'blunt,' especially a lady." Harry looked at his watch and started. "I find I must leave you somewhat suddenly, for my time is long since up. I had not the slightest idea that it was so late."

"I am very sorry to have kept you, Mr. Duncan." Maggie's tone was cold again.

"I regret very much," he said, "that I cannot stay longer—that I cannot accompany you back, as I should so like to do. Will you forgive me for my bluntness?"

"Forgive you? I have nothing to forgive," returned Maggie, graciously.

He shook hands cordially, and was gone, hurrying down

one of the roads away from the downs towards Somerleigh. And Maggie walked backwards and forwards pondering.

* * * * * * * *

They dined early at Rose Villa on Sundays to liberate the servants, and, after dinner on the Sunday succeeding her interview with Harry Duncan, Maggie, as well as her sister and brother-in-law, prepared for Sunday-school work.

"Why have you not taken a class in our school, Maggie," asked Edward Burnard, as they walked along, "instead of going to the ragged-school?"

"I don't think Mr. Jones wants any teachers who do not profess to be converted, and church members," said Maggie, unflinchingly, "and that shuts me out. Now Harry Duncan says that their superintendent, Mr. Forrest——"

"I know him very well; he is a devoted, good man," put in Mr. Burnard.

"Well, Mr. Forrest believes in employing any one who is willing to work, and he has teachers in his school from almost every section of the Christian Church."

"I know he has, and I rejoice at it," said Mr. Burnard; "that is true catholicity; and I believe there are few bands of teachers more united than his in the performance of their work. Harry Duncan is a host in himself. The good that one man accomplishes in a place like Somerleigh is immense. I wish I could feel that I was doing even a tenth part as much myself. Only last evening I went down to the West Quay on business, and found him sitting near the water-side on a block of timber, his open Bible in his hand, while gathered around him was a group of sailor boys, all of them foreigners, to whom he was giving a Scripture lesson in French, which most of them could understand. But this is your nearest way, Maggie. Go down Easter Lane and across the Arcade; West Street is nearly opposite, and the

corner house of West Lane, which turns out of West Street, is the school."

"Thank you, Edward—I have been there once," said Maggie; "I shall easily find it again. *Au revoir*, dear ones;" and she was gone.

"I shall be much mistaken," observed Mr. Burnard to his wife, "if Maggie is not improved by her Sunday-school work. She will become acquainted with her own powers, her own temper, her own shortcomings, her need of a strength superior to her own, better than through the medium of any friend."

"I feel sure of it," said Annie, watching the retreating figure of her sister; "dear Maggie!"

Maggie walked on briskly, her pretty face, her elegant style, her dainty clothes becoming less and less in keeping with the dingy surroundings as she neared the ragged-school. West Street was a gloomy thoroughfare indeed, given up almost entirely to factories. Sugar-boiling, soap-making, and brewing were the principal employments prosecuted there on week-days; and the lanes which, like West Lane, led out of the street were inhabited by the very poor. At the other end of West Lane were the river, the shipping, and several low public-houses and beershops that were frequented by sailors. The more respectable workmen at the factories lived at a distance from West Street; the idle, dissolute, profligate, extravagant ones, or those whom some unfortunate circumstance kept unusually poor, lived in the lanes adjoining.

The sun was bright and warm that autumn Sabbath, and penetrated as far as it could into that comfortless region, exhibiting all the more plainly its squalor and wretchedness. The place seemed to swarm with children. The hour for school had not yet come, and the school-house doors were shut, but the scholars were ready, and waited about as if it

was the chief business of their afternoon. Way was made for Maggie as she passed through the little throng, and then she tapped modestly at the outer door. It was opened by the man who had charge of the place, and she was admitted, and requested to go straight on into the large schoolroom. In the passage she met Harry Duncan, hat in hand.

"I am glad you are come, Miss Griffiths," he said, in his kindest manner, and in tones that were a sufficient welcome. "I was just going to run out and look for you. Let me introduce you to Mr. Forrest."

Harry Duncan led Miss Griffiths into the very large, very bare, very scantily-furnished room, where chairs and forms were duly arranged for the afternoon's work. By the desk at the upper end stood the superintendent looking over some books. He was a stout man, of middle age and middle height, somewhat bald. His hair and whiskers, which had once been light brown, were now considerably sprinkled with grey. His features were not handsome, but his countenance was one of the most kindly and pleasant. He inspired and won confidence at once. His honest blue-grey eyes had a sparkle of fun in them, and one cordial warm grasp of his friendly hand was worth the touch of a thousand finger-tips.

Mr. Forrest was an embodiment of truth. How the children loved him! They troubled him often, but he had a hopeful disposition, and, though frequently discouraged, and plunged into waves of distress; hope, like a genuine life-buoy, brought him soon to the surface again, ready to combat with the next storm. For Mr. Forrest was not only superintendent of this ragged Sunday-school once a week, but he was also the master of the ragged-school every day; he plodded on amongst these boys every morning and afternoon save Saturday; and then on Sunday, because he loved God, and loved these poor children for whom Christ

died, he gave them a great slice of his hard-earned leisure, his day of rest. He lived amongst these people, too, next door to the school, which was the corner house of the lane; the first house in West Street was occupied by Mr. Forrest, his kind-hearted energetic wife, and their half-dozen growing-up children. The house belonged to the school property, and it formed part of Mr. Forrest's salary. It was a blessing for the poor that it was so. It seemed a leaven of godliness, contentment, and cleanliness amongst the impurities around. In the midst of their troubles and distresses his neighbours felt they had a true "friend," who was never hard upon them; if he was obliged to chide, he did it tenderly. By the large-souled, great-hearted Christianity he both preached and practised, he made it more easy for these poor, burdened, tempted creatures to understand that "like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." The history of West Street and its lanes was in great measure known to Mr. Forrest—the characters of the people around him were no secret; and a more implicit confidence—a confidence never abused—could hardly have been placed in the goodness of man than was placed in Mr. Forrest by his poor neighbours.

Mr. Forrest turned, with the most genial air possible, as Harry touched his shoulder and said, "This is Miss Griffiths, Mr. Forrest."

"And you are come to do a little work amongst us, my dear young lady? I thank you heartily. Mr. Duncan tells me you would like a class of boys. I am afraid I cannot recommend them very much; they are the raw material, and you must bring them into order, and then polish them if you can. Do you feel afraid to undertake them?"

"Oh no," said Maggie—"I will try. I am quite a novice in this kind of work, so you must not expect me to get on well for a while, Mr. Forrest."

"I shall not expect anything in the way of results, my dear Miss Griffiths, for many Sundays to come. If you can 'measure' your charges by that time, it is all I shall expect. Tom, go and tell Mr. Bond to open the door."

These words were addressed to Mr. Forrest's little son, a boy of ten, who immediately disappeared. Meanwhile several teachers had come into the room, and taken their seats on the different chairs, waiting for their classes. And presently there was a great noise and rush along the passage, and in there poured boys and girls, in some confusion, hastening to their places. It was to be observed that where the teacher was already seated the children advanced to their forms in a more orderly manner.

"I will take care always to be in good time," thought Maggie.

Harry Duncan had left her side for his own class; she could not help following him with her eyes as he took his seat and great and little boys clustered around him. He shook hands with each, and they all answered back his loving smile.

"If I can only gain such influence as that!" thought Maggie.

Most of the children were meanly attired—many were truly ragged; others, on the contrary, especially the girls, were decked out in a good deal of tawdry finery. The noise of the many voices in this little Babel almost confused Maggie. She was not sorry when Mr. Forrest rang a bell and the voices were lowered to whispers. A second ring obtained silence. And then he asked Maggie to follow him, and led the way to her class.

It was very near Harry Duncan's. Her chair was so placed that she was compelled to sit with her back to him, a rudeness for which she smilingly apologised, and was as smilingly forgiven. But she could not help occasionally

hearing his earnest words—she could not help knowing whether his lads were orderly and attentive. Seven boys, varying in age from seven to twelve or thirteen, were ranged on the two forms on each side of her chair, and stared at her with the most unwavering gaze as she took her place. Whatever could she say to them to keep them interested for a full hour? She began to think she had made a mistake in coming—the children were so rough, so untaught, they knew so little of anything she knew, their whole life was so utterly different from her own.

"Some of your class are strangers to the school," said Mr. Forrest, as he left her, after bringing her a hymn-book such as they all used, and some Bibles; "I hope they will stay and be good boys, and a credit to the school and their teacher." He patted the nearest child on the head as he said this, and then he went back to his desk and gave out a hymn.

It was sung creditably; the superintendent had a real taste for music and an agreeable voice, and some of the lady teachers sang sweetly.

All the teachers in this room, Maggie found, were ladies, except three—Harry Duncan, Mr. Forrest's eldest son—a young man who was a counterpart of his father, save in energy—and a tall, thin youth, with a pale, hollow face, large dark eyes and a cavernous voice, who looked too ill to be there at all. There were about two hundred children present, and about twenty teachers.

After the hymn came a short, simple prayer from Mr. Forrest. All the teachers and most of the children knelt. Maggie followed their example, and told her boys to do the same; but few of them obeyed her—they were whispering and shuffling their feet, and one whistled during prayer-time. When it was over they sat again in their places, and talking began. The bell at the desk sounded very loudly; there was silence at once.

"Who whistled during prayer?" questioned Mr. Forrest.

No one answered. Maggie knew. Should she tell?

"Who whistled?" repeated Mr. Forrest.

"A new boy, sir," said one of Harry Duncan's class.

"Are you quite sure, Bill?"

"Quite, sir."

"Very well; then he will not be turned out to-day. Know this, my boy: there are many bad things done during prayer; God knows them all. He is here in this schoolroom with us; He sees what I cannot see, He hears what I cannot hear, and He knows all. But, because whistling disturbs the whole room, I am obliged to punish it more than some other things which may seem to you—and which in God's sight may really be—as bad. For the sake of good order, and of that reverence which our speaking to God in prayer should have, a boy who knows the rules and whistles is turned out of this school for a month."

"Is that true, teacher?" said a ragged little lad with a pale, shrunken face, to Maggie.

"I have no doubt of it. You mean about the whistling, don't you?"

"No—I mean that about God."

"Yes, it is. Before we begin our lesson I will take down your names, please," said Maggie.

"Be you the reglar teacher?"

"Yes."

"Coming always?" asked a merry little urchin who was indulging in hearty bites at an apple, occasionally favouring his neighbour and "chum" with a share.

Maggie replied in the affirmative, and then asked if they could all read. No—only one could read fluently, two or three could spell, the others merely knew their letters, and, what was considerably worse, did not much care to know

more; only the little pinched-looking boy was apparently anxious to learn.

"What has made you come to school?" Maggie asked at length, a little out of patience at their apathy.

"I guess I knows," said one.

"What is it, then?" inquired Maggie.

"They has a tea at this here school at Christmas."

"Well, 'tisn't Christmas yet."

"Ah, she don't know everything, do she?" said one boy, nudging his neighbour in the ribs, and laughing in Maggie's face.

"No, I don't," she rejoined, "and I want you to tell me what you come to school for, if you don't want to learn?"

"I want to learn," put in the pale child, piteously.

"And so you shall," said Maggie, kindly. "There never was a boy who made up his mind to learn but managed it somehow, and I'm only too glad to help you; and I'll help you all most readily," she added, earnestly, "if you will but try to attend. Now I want to ask you some questions, to find out how much you do know."

It was very little indeed that any of them knew—very few of those blessed facts in Bible history which are so familiar to children better circumstanced. The afternoon did not seem long to Maggie, and she was in the midst of an interesting epitome of the creation, put into the simplest words that occurred to her, when the bell rang as a signal for shutting Bibles.

"Then God made all the beasts and everything, ugly things and all?" said little Owen Roberts, the pale-cheeked boy, who looked as if he hardly ever had enough to eat.

"Everything," replied Maggie. "And there is a use for every living creature, even the ugliest."

Mr. Forrest gave out the hymn, and they rose up to sing.

"I think I shall like coming to school," said Owen.

Maggie felt more pleased at this than she could have believed possible to her before she came.

* * * * * *

"Well, Miss Griffiths, how have you got on?" asked Harry Duncan, overtaking her just after she had left the precincts of the school-house. "And what do you think of our school?"

"It seems a dreadfully bare place," said Maggie. "I thought people had pictures and maps in Sunday-schools, and tried to make the rooms attractive to the children."

"I wish we could afford it," returned Harry Duncan. "Perhaps I did not do wisely to advise you to begin your teaching in a ragged-school. If you went to some of the church or chapel Sunday-schools, you would find the rooms much more pleasant and better furnished. Here, unfortunately, we have to study economy—more perhaps than is good for our scholars."

"A few cheap but sensible pictures, and some flowers every week, could surely be managed even for West Lane Ragged-school," said Maggie, smiling.

"Some of us," explained Harry Duncan, gently, "would think first of feeding and clothing our scholars with the money."

Maggie thought of little Owen Roberts and was silent. She was wondering whether the child really had enough bread. Her good nature—rather, perhaps, her awakened moral nature—made her feel ashamed that she should have so many of the good things of this life, and be so careless hitherto of those who had almost none.

"You are not sorry you came to us?" asked Harry Duncan, mistaking altogether the cause of her silence.

"Oh, not at all; I am rather self-reproachful that I did not yield to your good advice and come sooner. Do you visit your children?"

"Certainly, as often as I can. At the very least a new teacher should visit all his or her children once, and then continue to look up the absentees. It is, I always find, a good thing to know what sort of people our children live with; it helps us to make allowances for them, and to feel patient when they annoy us. I often follow in spirit each boy as he leaves me, and think of his home as I have seen it, and it does me good, and I hope eventually does him good also."

"Sunday-school work involves a great deal of other work, Mr. Duncan."

"It does, when it is done faithfully."

"You practically become a district visitor," said Maggie.

"Well, I think that is just the truth," assented Harry Duncan; "indeed," he added, "one great beauty of Sunday-school work is its width, and the opportunities it affords for further usefulness, if we are inclined or able to seize them. When our great and good founder and forerunner, Robert Raikes, first began Sunday-school work in Gloucester, perhaps he scarcely dreamed to what far-reaching results his noble idea, when expanded, would extend. He was a moral Columbus, who added a whole continent to the moral and spiritual hemisphere of mankind; and how fast the tide of emigration at once set in towards it, how many ardent, energetic minds eagerly embraced the opportunity of doing good which it presented! I like to think, too, of poor old John Pounds, the cobbler, who, even before Robert Raikes set to work, established a ragged Day and Sunday-school, tempting poor forlorn children to it with slices of bread. Indeed, there were men, and women too, up and down the country, who, if I may continue my simile, had discovered

portions of this new region, before it was altogether revealed to Raikes. When the historian of Sunday-schools comes into existence, or rather when he takes his pen in hand, I hope he will make it his business to collect these interesting outlying facts in relation to the movement. The burning, yearning zeal for God which led men to desire to work for Him in this field of labour, which awoke them to the consciousness how much good ground was lying idle, was finally amalgamated—so to speak—in the mind of Robert Raikes, and blended and moulded into that glorious scheme of his, which is capable of almost any amount of extension; and for this reason—because it requires but the simplest machinery, and meets a veritable need of the universal Church of God. Another advantage of Sunday-school work is the golden link it supplies to unite every class of society which engages in it. There can be no question that it tends to elevate the very lowest to something like respectability—and the most miserable child in our school knows it is not shut out from at least some kind thought and interest. The more we can do to break down the walls of separation between the different members of God's great family, the more united and happy will that family become—the more will it see that what is necessary for one is good for all; that what injures one, has a counterpart of injury for others."

"I wish we could improve the children's manners more decidedly," said Maggie, presently, adding, "How do you manage, Mr. Duncan?"

"I tell them I will not have rudeness or misbehaviour, and that, if they choose me for their teacher, they must abide by my rules."

"But I cannot do that," said Maggie; "my boys were given me to teach—they had no choice."

"Nevertheless try my plan; be firm, and you will ac-

complish what I have accomplished. You can state your determination, and say they must abide by it. After that, if they break your rules, let the common penalty of disobedience come upon the offender, and let him be turned out for a month."

"I think I will follow your advice," said Maggie, as they shook hands and parted.

CHAPTER VI.

THE OLD HOME.

THE fine autumn Sabbath on which Maggie Griffiths began Sunday-school teaching was followed by many days of dull, dark weather, when the rain poured down with hardly any intermission. Everything appeared damp even in the driest houses. Mr. Burnard's office at his foundry, in spite of the well-kept fire, had a moist atmosphere within it. The wind, as it moaned and roared, and the driving rain, made him think of his last day in Edinburgh, and of little Jessie, the Flower of the Grassmarket. From her his mind wandered back to long-past days. Recollections were crowding fast upon him; he was in no mood for work, and he turned his chair to the fire and gave way to a long fit of musing.

He was a boy again, far away from Somerleigh, on the north-east coast of England, where the grand far-reaching sea sweeps with one long bold line of breakers up to the shore, and dashes in wild confusion upon the sandy beach. On the outskirts of the village of Revelstone his father had lived in an old mansion that had been in the family of the Burnards almost from time immemorial. It was fast going to ruin now, but it had been a grand place when in its prime, and Mr. Burnard saw in his musings the old square court, around two sides of which the house was built, the third being occupied by the outhouses, stables, and coach-house, and the fourth bounded by a wall, in the centre of which was the gate, while gardens and orchards lay around the mansion. During Edward Burnard's childhood his father had entertained a great deal of company, and had

been a dashing hunter himself, and the kennels, with their well-fed, sleek occupants, were favourite haunts of Mr. Burnard's sons.

He had already a large family—eight boys, of ages ranging from two to eighteen years—when the only girl was born. Edward, who was naturally of a gentle, affectionate disposition, gave himself, as far as it was possible for a boy to do, to the care of this little sister, who was christened Euphemia, but always called Effie. She was a sweet little baby, engaging in every pretty infantile way; and no sooner had she learnt to walk than she was her brother's constant companion. He was the fourth son, and about thirteen years of age when Effie was born.

Mr. Burnard's family, being far removed from any good school, had a tutor to carry on the education of seven out of the eight sons; and Mr. Burnard flattered himself that his cheap mode of educating his family enabled him to keep a hound or two the more. He was a hearty, genial, kindly, noisy man, but very thoughtless and sadly extravagant, and so the inhabitants of Burnard Court lived in curiously diverse fashion. When rents were just paid and money somewhat plentiful, the best of food and the most costly of drinks were spread upon the board, and the first companion the squire met was invited to partake. At other times, when cash ran low, the children and servants were often only partially satisfied, and that with the very plainest fare. Mrs. Burnard seemed to take little pains to make things more comfortable and the family's style of living more respectable. She wrapped herself as it were in a mantle, which she termed piety, and "let things go." And "go" they did. There was no similarity of sentiment, no true union of heart, between her and her husband; and this was the cause of much misery amongst the children. It was most unfortunate, too, that, while Mr. Burnard, who did not profess

any interest at all in religious matters, was at least indulgent and good-natured to his boys and to his little daughter, Mrs. Burnard made it "a point of duty" to be extremely stern, and to force what she called "religion" upon them, a thing so unlike true Christianity that it was no wonder they refused it. It is always a terrible misfortune for a man when he cannot recall the tenderness of his mother; and few indeed were the caresses, or even the kind words, which Edward Burnard could remember to have received from his.

Several of the boys went wrong; and who can wonder at it? The eldest son, a fine young man, and the pride of his mother, if she allowed herself to feel proud of any of her children, married beneath him—married a fisherman's daughter living on the cliff, a mile away from his home. She was a good honest girl, but uneducated, and had, of course, no fortune but her pretty face, which had first captivated the young man, and her honest true heart, which retained his love after he had won her. People said they were far happier than their parents at Burnard Court, but his mother never forgave him, and tried to persuade his father to disown him. Burnard Court, however, was entailed, and, in spite of the mortification of the elder Mrs. Burnard, no one could prevent Charles from coming into possession of the ancestral residence at his father's death. The second son entered the Navy, after a course of irregular life at home, and was absent for many years. The third followed his father's example at home, and wasted both time and money, living a idle, dissolute life, and disturbing the peace of the whole household. Next came Edward, always steady, and at an early age determined to devote himself to the service of God. There was a living appertaining to Burnard Court —the living of Revelstone—and Mr. Burnard senior, highly pleased to find one of his sons steady and studious, decided to give it to Edward.

But, in spite of his desire to please his parents, and his determination to live a religious life in the highest and best sense, the conscientious youth refused to study for the Church—for he knew well he had not the gifts which should make him an acceptable preacher of the Gospel, and he did not feel called upon to become a clergyman. Whereupon his father's anger at his "folly," and his mother's annoyance at what she deemed his headstrong refusal of the bountifulness of Providence, waxed strong, and he was treated with as much disfavour as the sons who were wildly making havoc of their good name and good constitutions. In those days of doubt and trouble little Effie had been Edward's comforter. Arthur, the fifth boy, was, as his mother expressed it, more willing to listen to reason, and went to college with Revelstone in view. Nelson, the sixth, was the constant companion of the reckless James, and seemed likely to follow in all his evil ways. Mr. Burnard groaned even now by his office fire as he thought of those two brothers of his—dead long since—in the days of their youth, when they hastened hand in hand to destruction. Over the youngest two, Oswald and Tom, Edward had exercised a wise and loving influence, and they were now living and doing well at the antipodes, being old-established Australian colonists.

As their brother recalled all the old familiar faces of Burnard Court, Effie's was prominent amongst them—she who had had as sad a fate as any. She had been Edward's pet from infancy, and she continued to be so all through her innocent childhood. He scarcely ever went to walk alone—the little hand was in his, the sweet face was turned up to his own to gain a smile, the artless prattle of her winning voice was in his ears. He read to her, sang to her, played with her, made for her her most prized toys; and when she was tired he carried her home—yes, even as he had

carried little Jessie to the chemist's shop and to the hospital, closely nestled to his heart. At that time he lived only for his little sister. He had boyish dreams of making her a home. Sometimes he determined to emigrate and take her with him to some new land, where she could keep house for him, and where such corroding cares as infested Burnard Court should never oppress them.

As Effie grew into womanhood she became very lovely, with a healthy blooming beauty, rich in colour, glowing and bright. Her eyes were of an intense blue, and full of fun; her lips like coral, her teeth white and glistening. Her figure was at once well rounded and graceful, her step light, her whole air expressive of enjoyment of life. Her mind was not deep and earnest like that of her brother Edward; she more nearly resembled her father in temperament. She was a creature of impulse, of sudden fancies, high-spirited and self-willed, quick-tempered and self-indulgent. She was so very beautiful that she took her place without difficulty as queen over the men of her household, her father and brothers all admiring and making much of the only girl. Her mother alone troubled and thwarted her, sneered at her beauty as a temptation, and made her unhappy whenever she was with her.

Very soon others admired Effie openly besides the members of the home circle, and Mr. Burnard and his sons received so many hunting invitations during the first season that Effie's beauty had burst upon the little world of Revelstone in all its dazzling brightness that they hardly knew which to accept. But Effie was kept so much at home, and so quietly employed by her mother, and was, too, so little versed in the world's ways, that the young men who were longing to make her acquaintance were unable to make much progress. Yet, by degrees, Effie's pride, or rather her vanity, was awakened, and she deigned to show herself

more and more frequently in Revelstone; and at last she entreated her father to let her go to some of the parties and balls to which she was invited. Her mother, she remarked, was surely not to control all her actions, and to shut her up like a nun, now that she was a woman. Other girls had a chance of seeing life and making pleasant acquaintances—it was hard that she alone was to be prevented. Of course her father, as she talked thus, with her arms around his neck and her soft sweet kisses filling up the pauses, was easily won over to promise anything she desired.

It began to dawn upon him about this time that Effie's beauty might enable her to make a grand match. He had but a sorry portion to give her. So he overruled, or rather set aside altogether, his wife's objections. Effie went to the balls and parties, but without her mother's blessing. She stayed up late dancing; she lost some of the healthy bloom from her face, and much of her good spirits; but she had half a dozen lovers vieing with each other which could please her most. She enjoyed her power; she enjoyed the pretty things they brought her—the lovely flowers, the charming pieces of music and songs to suit her bird-like voice, the rich fruits, the pretty *bijouterie*, the numberless little trifles of which women are naturally so fond—and she received all the donors by turns in a way that would have grieved Edward had he known it. But, having become an engineer, he had gone to Glasgow to perfect himself in his business, and the poor girl lacked his care and counsel at the very time when she most needed it.

Amongst Effie's lovers was a rich unprincipled young man named Samuel Maxted. His father had made money in the cotton trade, and had saved a large fortune for his son, which that son was quite ready and able to spend at a much faster rate than it had been earned. He boasted of his conquests over many other fair ones, but humbly confessed

to Effie that at last he himself was conquered. After a while, Mr. Burnard, suddenly awakened to a sense of his duty by a letter from Edward, made some inquiries about the young man in Lancashire, near his late father's residence and mills, and was horrified to discover that his character would hardly bear investigation. There was a check at once given to the love-making. Sam Maxted was forbidden to enter Burnard Court, and Effie was as decidedly forbidden to hold any correspondence whatever with him.

Mrs. Burnard, with grim composure, reiterated continually :—

"I am not in the least surprised; I knew exactly how it would be from the first moment that you so coolly dispensed with my care of Effie. Perhaps, Mr. Burnard, you are now convinced that I do know a little better than their father does how to manage the children." And Mrs. Burnard's eyes dropped again upon the book of sermons she was complacently reading, when her husband came to tell her what he had been obliged to do and say on Effie's account.

"Well, Ann," said Mr. Burnard, "I hope, without being harsh to her—for she has done nothing wrong, poor dear—you will take Effie well in hand, for the less she is out and about, till that young scamp has left our neighbourhood, the better."

"You have taught your daughter to set aside her mother's authority; you had better complete her education in your own fashion," rejoined the wife, bitterly. "You were anxious to have her married. I consider marriage a sad fate, from which any one may rightly pray to be delivered."

"Amen," said Mr. Burnard, ironically, his easy good-nature for once forsaking him, and with an asperity that was foreign to his nature.

Mrs. Burnard turned sharply round, and looked at her

husband with eyes that had only surprise and not a particle of affection in them.

"So," she said, "we are of one mind at last, are we?"

He did not answer her, but walked quickly out of the room and banged the door behind him.

"If religion improves people—and she's religious—whatever would she be without it?" he asked himself, as he left her.

Effie did not intend to obey her parents; nor did Mr. Maxted intend she should. He had set his mind—he had no heart to set—upon winning Effie, and at the same time he desired to humble the pride of the Burnards. He wiled her from her home, he promised to take her to his mother and sisters, he read passages from letters professedly theirs, referring in the kindest terms to the bewildered girl, now for the first time in her life under the ban of her father's displeasure, and utterly neglected by her mother, save in so far as she heard from her lips the most cruel taunts. Effie was as headstrong as she was lovely, and she put undoubted faith in her lover, so the catastrophe soon came. One morning at breakfast-time Effie was not to be found anywhere, and the most diligent search revealed no trace of her. Her most expensive dresses—she had by no means a costly wardrobe—her few articles of jewellery, and all the money she possessed were gone, and she had left no clue whatever by which she might be discovered. The Revelstone police and the county police were put on the alert, but she had disappeared mysteriously and entirely. Minute and repeated inquiries brought to light the fact that she had been for a walk on the beach the preceding evening, and no one seemed to be sure that she had returned to the house afterwards.

"Edward," said the distracted squire of Burnard Court, "is the only one who can help us in this sad business, for she loves him fondly, and he dotes upon the child."

Edward was summoned, and the sad news plunged him into terrible grief. No one had ever before seen the quiet boy, the composed, peaceful man, exhibit such strong emotion. The story of his sorrow was written in lines upon his face from that day forward. But even Edward could not trace the footsteps of the wanderer. He went to the residence of Sam Maxted—he requested an interview with his mother and sisters. With shame they confessed to him the dissolute habits and practices of their son and brother. They denied all knowledge of his acquaintance with Effie, and that they had had the least share in beguiling her from her home. They did not even know where Sam was, save that they had received within the last month one letter from Revelstone and another dated Paris, in which last he expressed his intention of travelling through Germany and Switzerland, of perhaps even going to Egypt and Palestine, before he turned his face homewards. Was Effie with him? Edward went immediately to Dover, and endeavoured to trace the fugitives. He did the same at Folkestone and Newhaven, but without result. They might have crossed to Ostend, they might even have sailed away from Revelstone; they had, at all events, managed to elude the vigilance of those who were interested in Effie, and to leave as little trace of their departure as two beings could possibly do. Sam Maxted had lodged at Revelstone, at the Burnard Arms, the best inn in the place, which was a good deal frequented as a lodging-house in the summer and autumn months; but all the host would or could tell Edward Burnard was that his guest left his house rather unexpectedly one evening, after giving orders that his portmanteau was to be carried to the station and sent on to York, where he intended to be, he said, in a few days; but which way he went himself that evening was more than the landlord knew. A journey to York only proved that the portmanteau had

been claimed almost immediately by its owner and the carriage expenses paid. It was plain that the Burnards were far too much behind Sam Maxted to be able to discover him, as long as he chose to elude their pursuit.

What had he done with Effie? It was a question that tormented Edward Burnard morning, noon, and night. Nothing but tenderest pity for the misguided but still most tenderly loved sister ever found place in Edward Burnard's heart. He could not bear to listen to his father's angry invectives against both her lover and herself, or to listen to his mother's heartless judgment of her only girl. He had heard of a working partner being wanted in an iron-founding business at Somerleigh, and, as he had saved a little money, he started off from home, more readily and gladly than he liked to admit, for home was hardly worth that endearing name without Effie, and for many years he had been settled at Somerleigh. During that period, though many changes had come, no change had dispelled the misery and the mystery concerning the fate of his sister. During those years he had succeeded to the business of his old partner, who had retired, both his parents had died, and his brothers James and Nelson had met an unexpected fate. The wild, reckless men were out hunting together while in a state of intoxication. They boasted of their ability to leap a wide ditch, each betting against the other about the performance. Both urged their horses to take the leap. One animal, wiser than her master, refused, and, plunging and backing and rearing, threw James upon the ground. He never recovered the shock, and died a few days afterwards. Nelson's horse, spurred and whipped by his impatient rider, made the dreadful leap; but his rider, not steady enough in his seat for so dangerous an experiment, fell off into the ditch and was killed upon the spot.

Edward Burnard could hardly bear to think about these

two brothers of his, although their deaths had happened at least five or six years back. From boyhood upwards their lives had been wasted, selfish lives, and scarcely any one could remember a good deed or a kind act that either of them had ever taken the trouble to perform. Charles Burnard and the fisherman's pretty daughter, his well-beloved wife, now had possession of Burnard Court, and, by dint of careful economy and skilful farming on the home-land, it was said they were bringing the place into something like repair. But, though Edward Burnard corresponded with this brother in the friendliest way, there was little interest for him in the old place. It had never been a home to him, save when his darling Effie had gladdened it by her presence.

Comparatively late in life, Edward Burnard had fallen in love, and made a wise and happy choice, for Annie Griffiths, with all the tender, affectionate, endearing ways that had ever knit his heart to Effie, had likewise an unselfish, generous, gentle disposition, and was a Christian woman, nobly and perpetually battling against the evil that remained in her. The home of which she had become the honoured and beloved mistress just a year before was such a happy home, and his wife's love was so sweet to the careworn man, who had borne so much of the real hardships of life, that Edward Burnard's friends declared he was growing young again, and did not seem quite so out of place as the husband of his fifteen-years-younger wife as they had expected he would. The first glad smile that came to his lips through all his long retrospective glance at his life, that bleak autumn afternoon, played around them when he reached her in his reflections.

"My precious wife!" he said, softly, and as he spoke he opened a locket that always hung from his chain.

There were two likenesses in it. He gazed fondly at the

dear, pleasant face of Annie Burnard, so genuine, so truly good and earnest, which was enshrined on the one side, and yet a thousand times more deeply enshrined in his heart; and then his eyes rested with wistful, pitiful tenderness on the beautiful girlish countenance opposite—the only likeness that existed in her family of the wanderer Effie.

CHAPTER VII.

LIFE IN THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL.

TO the sweet little Flower of the Grassmarket the ward of the Children's Hospital was by far the prettiest room she had ever seen; she had never lived in any place but a dull bare attic, high up on the topmost flat of an old house. In this ward there were pictures on the walls, a talkative parrot in a gilded cage in the centre of the apartment, and a sprightly, songful little golden canary in another cage in one of the windows. A sociable old cat, which let the children do almost anything they liked with her, and made believe rather to enjoy it than otherwise, lived there a great part of the day. There was a glass case full of toys and models of ships and houses and gardens; there were bunches of artificial flowers fastened on the walls; there were baskets, bricks, Noah's arks, and toy tea-services scattered about. In the windows stood pots of bright scarlet and crimson geraniums; and here and there were vases of flowers of rich hues, sent from greenhouses by the kind owners to delight the eyes of the little ones. The bright sunshine had abundance of space to enter the room by the three large windows, the panes of which were kept well polished and stainless.

Directly the pain and headache which Jessie experienced for the first day or two began to subside, she had nothing to do but to lie still, with her poor little arm kept in splints, and in one position. This rest was welcome to the weary little girl, whose strength had been over-taxed, and who had been over-tired every day for the last twelve months of her short life. All the other children now began to manifest

the especial interest they took in her case. Little "toddling" beings of three or four years old came to play with her. Sandy, aged six, who had a curve in his spine and a slight impediment in his speech, brought to her in his arms what he called "the dwoll auld tat," and Jessie stroked pussy, and made friends with her at once. Bigger children described to her the glories of the Institution generally—the rocking-horse, the swings in the garden, the small easy-chairs, and the perambulators, in one of which no doubt she would herself take an airing, when she was better and able to move her arm. Jessie was so affectionate, so gentle, so winning in all her little ways and looks, and withal so wonderfully patient, that she became the pet of the whole ward; of the surgeons and physicians; of the students who came to study childhood's mishaps, diseases, and maladies; of the various nurses, and of the matron herself.

There was almost a danger that between them the little lassie would be spoilt. But, far from that, Jessie, like a true flower, seemed to unfold her lovely petals in the sunshine of kindness, and to bloom all the more radiantly for every loving word and look and favour of which she was the recipient. She used to amuse herself, amongst other things, by watching the occupants of the other beds. Those who were well enough got up each day, and a few who could bear exercise without fatigue went downstairs and out into the garden; but many were too ill to raise themselves in bed. Amongst the children who were fast getting strong and well were two little fellows named Johnny and Peter. These were not at all in a hurry to leave the hospital, where they had been so happy and so well taken care of.

"We'll no go back again to our mithers," said Johnny to his companion; "we'll just stay here and play the day."

This Peter echoed in his baby fashion, and the sentence

was repeated regularly till "the day" had grown into a week, and then Johnny devised various impromptu ailments to put off their departure. He had an aching head, or Peter had a pain in his stomach, or he would soon be having chilblains on his feet; and the nurses smiled, and, as long as they rightly could, admitted the goodness of the excuse.

How fond Jessie grew of Mrs. McAlpine, and what a kind, honest, true-hearted, self-forgetful creature she was! She had a thoroughly Scotch face, with high cheek-bones, prominent features, a ruddy complexion, and rather small but quick, bright-grey eyes. A truly genial face it was—a face that gave an unspoken invitation to children to come and trust her. Mrs. Glencross, the other nurse, was a bright, pretty, lively little woman, who kept everything spotlessly clean and neat, and romped with the children who were well enough to play, and insisted on things generally being done in a lively manner, if they came under her jurisdiction. But it was to Mrs. McAlpine that the little laddies and lassies ever turned when aches and pains afflicted them, or trouble of any sort encompassed them.

On Sabbath afternoons Mrs. McAlpine always devoted herself to her little charges. She might have taken "turns" with Mrs. Glencross, and gone out every alternate Sabbath to the afternoon service at her church, but she never did; she held what she called a "wee bit service" in her ward, and had, in truth, a little Sunday-school there. She gathered the little ones about her, as near to those who were confined to their beds as possible, and told them, in sweet, simple fashion, the dear old Bible stories she had listened to in her childhood, at her sainted mother's knee, when she was, as she said, "on'y just a wee, wee lassie mysel'." Many of her little pupils were too young, or had been too neglected, to have ever been to a Sunday-school, and not a

few of the "puir bairnies" listened for the first time in their lives to religious teaching from this good Scotchwoman, who tried to be a mother indeed to them all.

As a thirsty plant holds its calyx spread to the welcome dew, or drinks in eagerly the reviving rain, so little Jessie heard and listened to the evangel of Jesus Christ from the lips of Nurse McAlpine. She had taken down a picture of the Good Shepherd from the wall of the apartment, and she first explained to the little ones, gently and in few words, the shepherd's duty to his flock. She described with much graphic force a storm in the Highlands in early spring-time, till her little audience, following her words and gestures with eager ears and eyes, heard and beheld for themselves the howling wind, the raging tempest, the drifting, blinding snow. She pictured a flock of sheep and lambs exposed to this pitiless storm, till the children were almost crying from sympathy. She told how the woolly mothers put their little ones on the lee side of themselves for shelter; she imitated their cries to each other upon the hill-side. Then she described the coming of the kind shepherd, hurrying to his sheep, careless of biting wind or driving snow, taking the lambs in his arms, pressing them to his bosom, shielding them from the cutting blast, wrapping them round with his warm plaid, folding them in his tender embrace, guiding the sheep by his kind, cheerful voice, and sheltering them all, when the tedious journey was over, in a warm and comfortable fold.

"We are like the sheep in the storm, my puir wee bairnies," she went on, "and Jesus is our Shepherd. Hearken to His voice, bairnies, for He'll shelter ye, He'll tak' care o' ye, He will haud ye in His arms, and 'carry ye in His bosom.' Winna ye a' be His wee lammies?" How her heart—warmed with a measure of the love that is in Christ for the little children—yearned over her poor little charges, as she

thus pleaded with them in His dear name. "But to those who love Him," she went on, "and hearken to His words, He gives a work to do; they have to try no to be cross-ain wi' anither, and no to greet when they must na hae their ain will. Jesus the Guid Shepherd doesna like to hear His lammies greetin' sair because they are naughty; He doesna like to see the big lammie slap and scold the wee lammie, and snatch awa' his toys. Jesus wants ye a' to be unco guid to ane anither, and then He winna be grieved wi' ye. Ye wadna like to grieve the Guid Shepherd that gave His life for the sheep? For listen, bairnies—the fierce wolf wanted to eat a' the puir wee lammies up, but the Guid Shepherd He just let the wolf eat Him instead, and the lammies went free."

"Is the Guid Shepherd deed?" asked little Jessie, her sweet blue eyes, intensely blue as the sky of an Italian landscape, full of tears.

"He died," said Nurse McAlpine, "that we might live, but He came back frae death and the grave, for they couldna hold Him, Jessie."

"I'm glad He isna deed noo," said Jessie.

After this the good nurse called on the little ones to sing with her the Scotch version of the twenty-third Psalm, and then she heard them repeat short passages of Scripture. Some of the children who had been there a comparatively long while knew a great many verses, while others knew but few or none. Among these last was Jessie, who now had to learn a few simple words. Mrs. McAlpine gave her these: "I am the Guid Shepherd." They were the first the child had ever learnt. Pretty Bible picture-cards were lent by the matron to the little ones on Sunday, and slates and pencils, on which they drew wonderful imaginary animals, and houses, and men. Those who could read, read a chapter verse by verse to one of the nurses. The

Sabbaths in the hospital were very happy days indeed to the little Flower of the Grassmarket.

"Little Jessie," said the matron, coming to her one day, "I have had a letter about you from Mr. Burnard, the gentleman who brought you here, and who was so grieved because he knocked you down, and caused you to be run over. He wants to know how you are, and whether you are happy, and he sends some more money to pay for taking care of you; and Mrs. Burnard sends you this beautiful Bible for a present, and these cakes and sweets;" and as she spoke she laid the book and a packet on Jessie's little bed-table, where she was arranging with much interest a set of wooden tea-things, by the help of which she was about to feast her doll. The doll had been given to her by one of the visitors to the hospital a day or two before. With sparkling eyes Jessie listened to the matron's words.

"Will ye tell the bonnie gentleman," she said, "that I will soon be nearly well again, and that I am sae happy and sae blithe, and that I will be glad to see him again; and that I do like the bonnie book and the cakes and sweeties that the lady sends me. Nurse, will ye gie ane o' these to Aleck?"

Aleck was a patient little sufferer who lay near her. The generous, loving little hand added a number of comfits to the sponge-cake she placed in Mrs. McAlpine's hand for him.

Aleck's sad smile thanked Jessie, and a slight flush spread itself over his wan, pallid face.

"Now, bairnies!" called Jessie to the children; and they came from various parts of the ward to her.

"I have not said all I have to say to you, Jessie," said the matron.

"Bide a wee," Jessie cried to the expectant little ones; and the matron continued: "I want to read to you what

is written in this Bible;" and she read: "Jessie Macdonald, in remembrance of the 28th of September, 18—, from her sincere friends, Edward and Annie Burnard. 'Call upon Me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee.'"

Mrs. McAlpine was especially pleased with this gift to her little favourite. The beauty of the book, with its gilt-edged leaves and handsome binding, was something delightful to the child, but the nurse thought more of the priceless treasure hidden within for "this puir wee lammie o' the Saviour's flock."

"Do you know an old Irishwoman called Bridget Macarthy, Jessie?"

"Will I ken auld Bridget Macarthy? Oh, yes, matron, I ken her weel. Mony's the bit o' bread auld Bridget hae gi'en wee Jessie."

"She has come to see you. Would you like to have her up?"

"Will I like to see her, matron? Oh, indeed I will."

Jessie's sweet little face was all aglow with excitement, and the matron retreated to fetch Mrs. Bridget Macarthy into the ward. Nurse McAlpine and Nurse Glencross looked with some curiosity to see Jessie's visitor. She was a little old woman, with a face as dried and shrivelled and brown as a Normandy pippin, but she had a kindly look in her large, bright black eyes, and a smile that beautified the wrinkled mouth.

"Shure and it's mesilf that's delighted to see ye again intirely, my little darlint flower, that I thought was crushed and dead for iver and iver amen!" she exclaimed, hugging Jessie as if she had been the child's grandmother at the very least. "And yer tired to death of yer bed by this time, I'm thinkin'; and it's I that wish I had just a fine house, wid doctors and carriages and flowers and birds and toys, to ask ye to, my little darlint, where ye'd have it all nate and hand-

some loike, as ye have it about ye here. And ye've quite forgot us all in the Grassmarket and in the Close by this time; but we've not forgot ye, honey. There's the other darlints callin' for ye in their play, Jessie. I saw them as I come to ye, friskin' and jumpin' around the Corn Market —ye know the rails there—and they were houldin' on, and callin' through, 'Jessie Macdonald, we wants ye to come and hae a game wi' us!' loike as if ye was inside yerself."

"I'm glad they no forget me," said Jessie, laughing. "I mind them a' weel—Sandy and Jamie, and the other Jamie, and Tam and wee Lizzie, and Janet and Janet Gordon, and a mony mair; and, Bridget, will ye tell them a' sae frae me; and I send them my love, and I'll be better by-and-by, and come oot and play wi' them again."

"Shure, and ye look all the betther for comin' in," said Bridget, eyeing the child attentively, and marking with satisfaction that the half-starved, pining appearance had vanished from the little face and form, that something almost akin to plumpness was gradually rounding the little arms and neck, and that the faint, flickering pink colour in her cheeks was merging into a healthier tint.

"Has yer mother been to see ye, Jessie?" asked old Bridget.

"She hae no been yet," replied Jessie, the smile fading as she spoke.

"It's mesilf belaves she manes to come to ye to-morrow," said Bridget. "And now just ye shut yer blessed blue eyes, and see what I'll put before them."

Jessie obeyed. The other children watched the funny little old woman and her movements with great attention. With much difficulty she brought out of her pocket, in which it was decidedly a tight fit, a china ornament—the figure of a shepherd, with Pandean pipes in his mouth, and his dog

by his side in blissful repose—a companion ornament doubtless to some fair shepherdess with her lamb. Jessie's heart was still full of Nurse McAlpine's lesson, and with an eager cry of satisfaction, that richly compensated the good old Irishwoman, the little girl welcomed Bridget's gift.

"I ken, I ken weel," she said, in her sweet simplicity; "'I am the Guid Shepherd;' I hae learned a' aboot it, Bridget, and you've brocht me the verra thing."

The old woman seemed somewhat surprised, but just as much delighted, at Jessie's unbounded and unexpected appreciation of her gift, which was thenceforward a very cherished companion of the little invalid, and as much prized as a present could possibly be.

Bridget stayed a little while longer, and then, kissing the child fondly, and apologising, with all the native grace and warmth of her country, for her long intrusion, she took her leave.

Bridget Macarthy was right; the next afternoon Euphemia Macdonald called to see her child. The matron came to announce her to Jessie :—

"Your mother is come, Jessie, and wants to see you."

There was no brightening of the lovely eyes, as there had been when her old Irish friend was spoken of.

"Will ye no want to see your ain mither, lassie?" said Nurse McAlpine, rather reproachfully, feeling sorry both for mother and child.

Jessie did not answer, save by those blue orbs of hers, which turned so plaintively towards the questioner. The matron re-entered the room, followed closely by Mrs. Macdonald. She was a young woman of about thirty years of age, of middle height, with a woefully dissipated face and miserable garments.

"Well, Jessie," she said, in a cold, hard voice, and scarcely kissing her little girl, "how did this come about?

Are you not old enough to keep from getting your arm broken, unless I am always at hand to look after you?"

"You surely will not blame her for what was so purely an accident?" put in the matron.

"Jessie is dreadfully careless," said the mother, sharply.

"I don't think there was any carelessness on her part in this case," rejoined the matron.

"Everybody takes Jessie's part against me," said the mother.

The matron and nurses looked at her in surprise.

"I may go without the barest necessaries of life, but Jessie must be in clover," said Mrs. Macdonald. "She cares nothing for me; she is a heartless, wicked little thing—you know you are, Jessie; you cheat me dreadfully."

The child's lips quivered, and the sweet eyes filled with tears, but she did not speak. Her self-control was wonderful in one so young. Nurse McAlpine looked mystified. Nurse Glencross "ruffled" up, and could scarcely keep her hands off the "atrocious body, wha deserved naething less than to be put out."

"Before you blame your dear child in the least, you should listen to the particulars," said the matron, gravely. "I understand you were not at home when Mr. Burnard took the child to your house in Fraser's Close."

"Who?" cried Mrs. Macdonald. Her whole appearance had changed. The listless, cold, indifferent manner was gone. It appeared to the matron and nurses that she trembled from head to foot. Her face, pale and haggard from habitual intemperance, flushed painfully, her eyes questioned more eagerly than her parched lips, and she leaned forward impatiently in her chair as she sat by Jessie's bedside.

"Mr. Burnard," repeated the matron; "it was he who knocked down your poor little girl before the cab ran over her. He is very anxious about her even now."

"I beg your pardon," said Mrs. Macdonald, with her old cold manner, though she shivered and trembled still, "I thought you mentioned a name that is familiar to me."

"See, mither," put in little Jessie, as if to appease the anger she had unwittingly incurred; and she handed her the beautiful Bible which had been sent to her from Somerleigh, and which Mr. and Mrs. Burnard had requested she might be allowed to keep near her.

But the sight of the book, which Jessie designed as a peacemaker, seemed only to increase the distance between her mother and herself. Mrs. Macdonald took it, and looked at it attentively, reading the writing in it many times over. She shivered so painfully as she read that the matron said, kindly—

"Will you not warm yourself at the fire?"

It was a miserable face, so woe-begone, so despairing, that lifted itself from contemplating the fly-leaf of little Jessie's Bible, to say, as coldly as ever, "No, thank you, ma'am." Then, returning the book to its little owner, she remarked, "It is as I said—every one favours you, Jessie. I suppose you thought I would bring you something too, but I've nothing to bring but myself, and that's not worth bringing."

"Oh, mither!" The two reproachful words spoke of so much more suffering in her past life than a little child of five years old should have known.

"You won't want to see me again very soon, Jessie; you wouldn't care if you never saw me again," said Mrs. Macdonald, as she just touched with her lips, unwillingly, as it seemed, the burning little face of her child.

Jessie did not answer her mother, but when she was gone she hid her face in the bed-clothes and cried bitterly.

When the matron "compared notes" in confidence with trusty Nurse McAlpine, she said, "She certainly knows the name of Burnard. I should like to understand what it all

means. And, as I told you, he seemed to feel so acutely the injury to the child."

"I dinna ken what to say or believe," said Nurse Mc Alpine. "Wee Jessie has no guid friend in her ain mither, puir lassie. The whusky will ha'e ta'en the mither's heart out o' her bosom and left it cauld and empty, I'm thinkin'."

"I expect you are right; but I should like to know that woman's history. Did you notice what pure English she spoke?"

"She is no ain o' us, and I'm glad she isna," returned uncompromising Mrs. McAlpine.

"But what I mean," explained the matron, "is that she talks grammatical English, as if she had been brought up a lady."

"She's no lady in love to her child," said the nurse.

CHAPTER VIII.

EFFIE'S TEMPTATION.

IT was a bright moonlit night, late in October. Passers-by scarcely noticed a woman, meanly attired and sad of face, who hurried along out of Fraser's Close in the Grassmarket, up Candlemakers' Row, along George the Fourth Bridge, and so into the High Street, down which she threaded her way, on through the Canongate, till she reached the grand old palace and ruined abbey of Holyrood, over which the moonlight hovered like the pale shadow of its former splendour. Turning aside into Queen's Park, the wayfarer walked more swiftly towards Salisbury Crags, and began to climb the steep ascent. She met happy pedestrians enjoying the glories of that wondrous, weird beauty which the moon alone can spread over a landscape. She saw fathers and mothers with their little ones about them, and at every sight of others' happiness her lip curled derisively, or she uttered a bitter jeer.

For what purpose had this lone woman climbed these heights? Her clothes were so very old and thin, and a drab dull tint had taken the place of any colour that might once have been theirs. She shivered in the clear, somewhat sharp air of that brilliant autumn night. Up the narrow pathway on the side of the crags she sped, pausing here and there, for the stones cut through her thin and broken boots, and pierced her feet. She stopped at last to rest when nearly at the top. Softly from afar she heard the hum of the busy city, and saw its lights twinkling feebly in the distance.

"It must be put an end to," she thought within herself,

"and the sooner the better. I cannot live like this. What have I done, that I should endure such torture? I cannot live without drink to deaden and destroy this too active consciousness of mine; and I have no money for that—no money for anything—I am penniless. Every one, all things and all beings, are against me. I am against myself. What is that old text I used to know about a house divided against itself being 'brought to desolation'? Desolation! If ever one word could paint in black characters the history of my life, that word is 'desolation.'"

The dark shadows of the crags, all the darker for the white moonlight, were revealed to her as she arose and paused upon the very brink of the precipice.

"Why not?" she asked herself. "Why should I not cast myself down? A mutilated corpse at the foot of the crags, a sensational paragraph in the *Daily Review* and the rest of the papers, a few fussy inquiries by a solemn Scotch bailie and his followers, a recognition of the body as that of the wretched woman Euphemia Macdonald, sentenced a short while since to five days' imprisonment for drunkenness and disorderly conduct, a few tears from little Jessie's eyes—soon dried by all the tribe of matrons and nurses, with philanthropy waiting in the background to adopt her—a miserable, lonely funeral and a quiet pauper's grave, and there would be the end of it. Shall I? Suppose I didn't kill myself—suppose I were picked up bruised and shattered and bleeding, and had to linger on for months or years, the tenant of a hospital or a workhouse? No—there are pleasanter deaths to die than by a fall from Salisbury Crags."

So she sat herself down on the edge of the abrupt declivity, where, for any one less reckless of life, it might have been dangerous to sit. She had given up her intention, What an oppressive stillness and calmness rested on all

things! It seemed to her that the fierce, noisy, tumultuous hubbub in the Grassmarket would be more endurable to her at this moment than this awful quietude, this holy calm. A lady and gentleman passed where she sat. They were full of intense admiration of the beauty amidst which their loving heavenly Father permitted them to walk. But they were not so full of peaceful enjoyment, nor so wrapped in ecstatic admiration of the grandeur around them, as not to notice the poor creature at their feet. After a little whispered consultation between them, the gentleman retraced his steps.

"Is not that a dangerous spot where you are sitting? Let me help you up," he said to Euphemia Macdonald, and extended his hand.

She paid no heed to his words.

"Are you ill?" asked her questioner, kindly. "Pray let me help you."

She put out her hand without a word—a thin, cold, nerveless hand it was—and he raised her to her feet, and led her to the path. She turned and pursued her way along the hill-side without thanking him.

"Do they begrudge me even death?" she said grimly, to herself, when she was out of hearing, and the gentleman had rejoined his companion, to tell her of the strange reception of his aid, and the mute, sulky temper of the woman. On, round the hill, just behind Arthur's Seat, the forlorn creature sped. What a marvellous picture was there! The grand old lion-shaped peak on her left, and before her, on her right, Duddingston Loch, shimmering and gleaming and glittering in the moonlight; Duddingston's picturesque church, and Duddingston House above the loch, embosomed in trees which, though not yet bare, were embrowned by autumn's touch, and looked the darker and duller; farther away still, Craigmillar Castle, with Carbery Hill and the

Pentlands for the far-off background: all lay as plainly in sight as though it were day, for the moon above was at the full. There was something marvellously attractive in that exquisite scene, shining in the pale clear moonlight as if all things were covered with silvered snow, relieved grandly by the black shadows flung here and there by tree or house or hill. The loch itself lay like a richly-polished silver clasp on the bosom of night's fair, flowing robe. Duddingston Loch, its peaceful waters resplendent with the moonbeams—how the sad, weary eyes of the wanderer were drawn to that spot!

"That is the death to die," she said.

Quickly she retraced her steps a little, and then made her way down with difficulty from the Queen's Drive, on which she had been walking, to that lower road which leads to Duddingston. She walked swiftly, but for all that there was time for much thought ere she reached the shimmering loch; and thus her thoughts took shape:—

"Edward Burnard! Then it was he. It was my own brother whom I met on the North Bridge, and hurried away from, lest he should recognise me. *He* recognise *me!* I need not have troubled myself—it was not likely. No one cares to recall that there ever was an Effie Burnard. What have I done that they should all neglect me so? Surely they could find me out if they tried. Did I bring disgrace upon them? Did I cut myself off from them? So have others, and yet have not been cast off for ever, to die or to live as they can. Well, since they have not troubled themselves about me, I am determined they never shall know to what terrible straits I am reduced. Do my father and my mother yet live? Oh, they were hard upon me! And Edward is married and happy; I could see that. He looks happy—he is a good man—he always was good; and, oh, how he loved me in the old times—

the old times of innocence and peace! How lovely the flowers were then! How blue were the skies, how green the woodlands! How fair then were heaven's sunlight and moonlight! And Edward, too, could forget me—his little pet sister! He would not introduce me for the world to that wife of his, that spotless, pure Mrs. Edward Burnard" —a hideous mocking laugh broke on the calm stillness of the night—"for I am tainted, I am degraded, I am lost!" and again the low laughter, more dismal than tears, sounded on the quiet night-air. "Why did I believe him," she cried, passionately; "that cruel fiend in human form, who robbed me of my life's happiness? Why did he smile so sweetly with those deceitful eyes? Why did he talk so kindly and so gently with that lying tongue? Why did he look at me so tenderly with those cunning eyes? Why, oh, why was he allowed to do all this and wile me from my home?"

She was lost in thought for a while.

"Oh, the black, the horrible days that followed," she resumed, speaking softly to herself, "when my little boy died and I lay dying, and saw my sinfulness as if written on a scroll with an angel's pen of flaming fire! Why did I not die then? Oh, the weary, weary life since! Little Jessie, with her glorious blue eyes, they call the Flower. Alas, if they knew all, they would scorn her as the Weed of the Grassmarket. I can't bear to look at her. Her eyes reproach me; they tell me that I have wronged her, and I cannot bear it."

She drew near the loch; the beautiful water shone and sparkled before her eyes, as if attracting her to its clear depths. She was about to take the fatal plunge, when suddenly, as if a human voice had uttered the words, they sounded so solemnly and distinctly upon her ear, she heard the cry, "Prepare to meet thy God!" The wretched woman trembled and shook, and looked around her, and

then threw herself upon the ground. Everywhere, on hill and tree, on silver moon and glittering lake, the words appeared before her eyes, "Prepare to meet thy God."

"I cannot die," said Effie Burnard now, as determinately as she had before said, "I cannot live." And she tottered slowly back along the road, down St. Leonard's Hill and St. Leonard's Street, keeping as much as possible out of the main thoroughfares, and threading her way to the Grassmarket and to Fraser's Close through back and narrow streets.

She was very tired, for the walk had been a long one, and she slowly and wearily ascended the long winding stairs to the room on the flat that was so high; she entered the apartment, and, shutting the door, fell down exhausted on the wretched heap of rags that did duty as a bed. Effie's temptation to destroy herself was over, and she was soon asleep. But in her dreams she flung herself from the rocks, and made the fatal plunge in Duddingston Loch, and awoke with a scream to cry aloud in startling abruptness, "Prepare to meet thy God!"

CHAPTER IX.

STRUGGLING AGAINST LIGHT.

SIX months had passed since Maggie Griffiths commenced the work of teaching in West Lane Ragged Sunday-school. She was a clever teacher. She kept her children in admirable order, and managed to interest them greatly in their lessons. She was well read in books of travel and in history, and she was excellent at word-painting. Her children saw as well as read about the events in Scripture history. Her pictorial style of teaching was extremely well adapted to the class of minds she had to reach. She had, too, the bright energetic ready manner and the quick wit that boys are swift to appreciate in a teacher. She never scolded her pupils for their faults, but she managed to make these faults appear ridiculous to themselves and their fellows. She raised the tone of her class; she made them ashamed of their rough, coarse, wicked ways; she made them know how much they had to learn; she made them respect her for her ability, and she made them laugh with her at their bad habits. Her own neat attire and constant advice about cleanliness began to tell upon "her boys;" she encouraged them in this direction, by delicately and gently noticing with approval every improvement.

Yet Maggie was not satisfied. She felt there was a want of reality about it all—about herself in coming, and about that which she taught the children. She listened sometimes, when she could pause for a minute or two without remark, to Harry Duncan's words behind her. And she knew, though she could not have explained how she knew, or in what the difference consisted, that there was as wide a differ-

ence between her teaching and that of this devoted man as between the extremes of heat and cold.

This was the real explanation: Maggie was educating the intellect merely, Harry was educating both intellect and heart, and the heart chiefly. There was an eager, hungry look about Harry Duncan's class, as if they came to be fed, when he sat down amongst them. Her children came to be made quick, sharp, bright, and they sat as people sit under a witty lecturer, waiting to pick out the brilliant jokes, to catch the good things—with eyes that had interest in them truly, but neither hunger nor thirst. All save one, and that was little Owen. Owen's eyes, Maggie admitted to herself, were both hungry and thirsty, but they never went away satisfied. The unrest was there when the little fellow came, and he took it away with him again to his miserable home.

He loved his teacher dearly, for Maggie had been very kind to him. He was better off than he used to be—indeed than he had ever been, so far as this world's need went; for Maggie had inquired into his history, had visited him in his unhappy home, and had provided that he should never be hungry or thirsty again while he was too young to earn his own living, or want a bed, as he had almost constantly done before. But Owen's loving little heart—puzzled with all the evils around him in West Lane, and in the very house in which he lived, a house that was swarming with human beings—was busy seeking rest; and that heart-rest which he needed, Maggie did not know herself and could not tell him about.

Maggie declared one day to her sister Annie, half in bitterness, half in jest, that she was the knife-grinder at West Lane Sunday-school, good for polishing and sharpening boys' wits. And Annie Burnard, after the first two or three months of Maggie's Sunday-school work, had felt disappointed at its results.

"Maggie does not seem so improved as I thought she would be, Edward," she said one day to her husband; "she is irritable and moody, more than I ever before remember. Do you think she is working too hard about her class?"

"No, Annie, it is not that," replied Edward Burnard; "unless I mistake greatly, dear Maggie is kicking against the pricks."

"What do you mean, Edward?"

"There are difficulties which she cannot meet otherwise than by yielding herself unreservedly to God; she refuses to do that, and, like Paul of old, she is struggling against the visitations of the Holy Spirit."

On the following Sunday the Crucifixion was the theme of the day's lesson at school. Maggie would have avoided it if she could, for her heart told her she would not treat it aright. She lingered as long as might be over the reading of the lesson, and, as her boys read the concluding verses, she turned inadvertently and caught sight of Harry Duncan's class. They had begun to talk about the lesson, and the lads were gathered close round Harry, and were hanging on the words that fell from his lips. He was one amongst them, and together they were worshipping at Calvary. It was not so much that they beheld the tender majesty of that devoted Sacrifice, not so much that they saw the thorny crown and the cruel nails, but that they felt their *personal* interest in Christ's unparalleled self-renunciation and grand heroism. That dying Hero, Conqueror over death and sin, had conquered *for them*, if only each of their young hearts simply and truly cried, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief." That bleeding Christ expiring on the tree was the earnest of a risen Christ "waiting to save to the uttermost," and going "to prepare a place for them."

Maggie turned sadly back to her own children. She had

studied Roman history; and the outward circumstances of a crucifixion and the historical particulars she could explain admirably; she knew well the state of Judæa as a Roman province at that period; the customs of the country, the sects of the Jews, were by no means strange to her. She could describe the probable shape of the imperial purple robe in which the hard-hearted persecutors wrapped Jesus, when they mocked Him with what they ignorantly believed was a false royalty. But she could not realize her own vital interest in this vicarious suffering and this one death, which was of such infinite moment, because it gave life to millions and tens of millions of human creatures.

Her boys had finished their reading now; she had encouraged them to question her, as well as to answer questions, and little Owen said—

"But why did Jesus bear it, teacher?"

"Bear what, Owen?"

"Why did Jesus die?"

"To save people from the punishment of sin," said Maggie, as if she were stating a geographical fact, and with no more feeling.

"Must they have been punished else?" asked the child, eagerly.

"Yes," said Maggie in the same tone.

"How kind of Him!" observed Owen, softly, and a smile broke over the wan little face. "Don't you love Him for it, teacher? do."

Maggie did not answer this time, and Owen thought she did not hear him, so he repeated his question. Maggie was too honest to tell a lie, so she answered—

"I am not sure that I do, Owen."

"Didn't He really do it, teacher?"

"Do what?"

"Die?"

"Certainly He did."

"And did He die for *everybody?*"

"Yes," said Maggie, and added reluctantly, as if constrained to do so, that sublime truth, "He died that we might live."

"I should think you could not help loving Him, teacher."

"He'd got to do it," said one of the other children; "His Father told'n to—He'd got no choice."

"That wasn't so," contradicted Maggie, her strong sense of justice preventing her from allowing false views to be spread amongst her little flock, even for a moment. "God and Christ were equally willing. Listen, children: 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him might not perish, but have everlasting life.' 'I am the Good Shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.' You don't really *give*," Maggie went on, "if you are made to resign a thing. If your father took away your cap, to make me a present of it, and said you gave it to me, would it be the truth?"

"No," said the children.

"But, if you laid your cap on my knee with your father's approval, and said, 'Here, teacher, this is yours,' then it would be a gift from you—would it not?"

"Yes," they said again.

"But my cap wouldn't be no good to you," said one boy.

"Of course not," rejoined Maggie; "we were only showing what it is to give freely. Jesus freely gave up His life to save the world."

"And yet you don't love Him, teacher!" Owen said the words so sadly, so lovingly, so reproachfully, that Maggie could hardly bear it.

At that moment the bell rang for closing books. Harry Duncan's boys were many of them in tears; so was their teacher. It had been a happy afternoon to not a few, for,

melted by Christ's love, they were asking, "Sir, what must we do to be saved?"

The concluding hymn, "Abide with me," seemed to close with peculiar appropriateness the service, which had opened for some the strait gate and admitted them to the narrow way.

* * * * * *

"I am going to Sandycoombe next week, Annie," said Maggie, the next morning, to her sister.

The announcement was so abruptly made that Annie Burnard looked up in surprise.

"Why, Maggie, what sudden freak is this? Are you tired of us so soon?"

"I *am* rather tired of Somerleigh," replied Maggie; "I feel I want to look at the sea again, and I am sure auntie and dear uncle will be only too glad to have me."

"So are we only too glad to have you, Maggie."

"You are very kind, and so is Edward; it isn't that, but I am restless, I think."

"Was Edward right?" Annie asked herself. "Is Maggie trying to run away from a conscience that troubles her?"

"We are too quiet for you. We certainly have hardly any company," said Annie, reflectively, thinking how her sister had been wont to shine, and had enjoyed shining too, as the belle of Sandycoombe; "I am afraid Edward and I are living too much like recluses; he is so fond of having me all to himself for our quiet evenings," and Annie blushed as she said this, and looked the pretty young wife to perfection. "But there are duties to society as well. I meant to have managed somehow to get May Duncan here on a little visit. I had hoped it would be a pleasant change in her monotonous life; I am sure you two would have got on well."

"May Duncan!" cried Maggie, smiling not quite the

smile that Annie liked to see. "I certainly should not expect May Duncan to be much of an enlivener. She is dreadfully serious."

"She is happily serious, and therefore not dull," said Annie. "People who feel at peace with God and their own conscience, dearest Maggie, because their sins are forgiven, have the best right to be happy, and indeed they are so. You mean serious in the sense of religious, do you not? The little hymn is true:—

> 'Tis religion that can give
> Sweetest pleasures while we live;
> 'Tis religion must supply
> Solid comfort when we die.'"

Maggie had no words to offer in reply.

Having acquainted her sister with her determination to give up ragged-school work, Maggie Griffiths next proceeded to inform Mr. Forrest. She met him in the street, and told him she was going to her uncle's at Sandycoombe for some months. She hoped her boys would get on well during her absence.

"When do you go? This is most unexpected news, Miss Griffiths, and I am very sorry to hear it. I thought we could reckon upon you as settled at Somerleigh. You have been very useful in the school, and we can ill afford to lose your help. Can you supply us with a teacher to take your place?"

"No, indeed I can't, Mr. Forrest. My sister and her husband are both busily engaged at Taylor Street, as you know, and my acquaintance here is very limited. But you will easily find some one."

"I do not think so. Of course I must try. You will come next Sunday?"

"Yes, I can do that."

* * * * * *

"Miss Griffiths," said Mr. Forrest the following Sunday, as he met her in the school passage, "I *have* found a temporary teacher for your class. Mr. Duncan says he will take care of it while you are absent, and give it up with much pleasure on your return."

"He will have a very large class," commented Maggie. She could not have told whether she was pleased or displeased at this arrangement.

Harry Duncan overtook her after school, though she had made an unobserved effort to avoid him.

"I suppose you have taken leave of your class, Miss Griffiths? I am sure the poor boys will be sorry to lose you."

"Oh, no, I did not take leave of them; our relationship as teacher and taught is not of the strong and affectionate character you seem to suppose."

"You do the children wrong," said Harry; "they, and the other children in the school, care a great deal about their teachers. Often he or she is the very first person who, in the course of their short lives, has manifested a true desire to do them good; and the young are, many of them, grateful and loving in disposition. Look at little Owen Roberts, for instance."

"Yes; but I shall see that child again before I go. The others do not care."

"You misjudge them, Miss Griffiths. Shall you be absent from us long?"

"I am not sure that I shall ever come back again."

The smile which had beamed on Harry's pleasant face faded so suddenly that Maggie could not help observing the change. She was in an irritable mood, and by no means likely to be pleasant company, but Harry did not know this. Her speech had certainly puzzled him. There surely could not have been a quarrel between herself and

her relatives. Besides, Mr. Burnard, only a few weeks before, had spoken of her abode with them as likely to be permanent, only interrupted occasionally by a temporary brief sojourn with her relatives at Sandycoombe.

"I referred particularly to the school," Maggie said, presently.

"Not come back to your school work? Why, I have promised Mr. Forrest to keep your class until your return. I thought it was merely a temporary arrangement. Certainly we understood that was all that would be needed."

"Perhaps," said Maggie, in the cold, ironical tone Harry Duncan least liked from her lips, "it would have been as well if Mr. Forrest and yourself had taken my plans and wishes more into account."

Why did he feel so startled? Maggie Griffiths was evidently about to be married. Who need wonder at such a contingency, such a "plan" arising in the life of the beantiful, elegant, accomplished, and really clever girl before him?

"You will make over your boys to me then?" said he, gravely.

"With pleasure; they will profit immensely by the change. They have never benefited by my teaching. In all this six months' work, I know perfectly well I haven't done a tittle of good." Maggie spoke deliberately, coldly, bitterly.

"You are mistaken," rejoined Harry, steadily and quietly; "you have done much good. You have made your boys feel that some one superior to them in cultivation, in education, in position, was yet interested in their welfare, anxious for their improvement, and determined to try to give them the very help they needed to raise themselves from the unfortunate circumstances in which they were born and brought up. I think we have talked before of this important use of the Sunday-school. To show

poor children that others care for them, sympathise with them, are grieved when they do wrongly, are rejoiced when they do well, is not a small part of the work of a Sunday-school teacher, especially when he or she undertakes to work, as you have done, amongst the very poor."

Maggie had no answer—at least she made none; and for a while they walked on in silence. Harry Duncan began to feel painfully that his society was an intrusion. Yet he lacked the courage to leave her. He might never perhaps have the opportunity of speaking to her again in this manner. At any rate, for many months her bright presence would be missed from Somerleigh.

"Have you any hints to give me about my new scholars? Is there anything you would wish me to do for any of them?" he asked at length to break the awkward silence.

"Thank you," said Maggie, with just a trifle more of interest in her tone; "you will save my sister some trouble, if you don't mind undertaking a little matter on Owen Roberts's behalf. There is an old woman who keeps a provision shop in Peter Street—the turning at the bottom of West Lane; she is called Wilkinson."

"I know her," put in Harry, smiling; "she is a good old body, though not remarkable, I fear, for cleanliness."

"Well, she and I made a little arrangement with regard to Owen. The Robertses live next door, or rather they exist; and I did not wish him to be far from home."

"Just so," approved Harry.

"There was no bed for the child, and absolutely no place in which to put one; so Mrs. Wilkinson has to provide him with a bed, and breakfast and supper, for which I pay her five shillings a week—and she says she profits by the arrangement, though I can't imagine how. It is remarkably cheap board and lodging," and Maggie laughed her pleasantest laugh.

Harry joined her, remarking that many would do for the child at the same rate.

"Will you be so good as to see to this for me?" requested Maggie. "Owen is always to occupy a little room next to Mrs. Wilkinson's own. I have hitherto had a look at it occasionally to satisfy myself that it is kept as clean as one could expect in such a locality. I gave the woman a blanket for him, and he tells me he sleeps 'like a top' now. I pay her every Thursday. I will give you five pounds for Owen, and when that is exhausted I shall be either coming back, or I will send word to my sister to let you have some more. Shall I leave the money with your sister, or will you be calling before I go?"

Harry Duncan thought he would call. "Which day do you leave, Miss Griffiths?" he asked.

"I am going on Wednesday. May I ask you to make sure that Owen really has bread and milk? I took him to our doctor once, and he said milk was absolutely necessary for the child."

"You said you had not done any good, Miss Griffiths; would little Owen say so?"

"I do care a good deal for that poor child," said Maggie; "he is such a quaint, honest, true-hearted little fellow."

"And I am sure he cares for you."

"Won't you come in, Mr. Duncan?" inquired Maggie, as they reached the gate of Rose Villa.

"No, thank you; I should enjoy doing so, but I have so many things to attend to that I must not be late back for tea."

When Harry called on the Tuesday evening Maggie seemed to him to be colder and more distant than ever. She bade him good-bye as carelessly and indifferently as possible, though she did not forget to hand him the five pounds for poor little Owen. He asked himself all the way

home why he had expected or wished her to be and do otherwise.

"I know you'll be glad to see my face turned towards Sandycoombe," Maggie remarked to Annie as she seated herself in the train the morning after her interview with Harry Duncan. "I believe I have been dreadfully surly of late, and acted a good deal like a discontented bear, growling and snapping at everything."

"I have fancied you are not happy, dearest Maggie; can you not tell me what ails you?" Annie spoke so tenderly, with such winning, pleading love, that Maggie could not answer in the bantering or ironical tone she had so often assumed of late. "Is it not, Maggie, that you refuse to come to Him who gives the only true rest?"

Ere Maggie could reply the train had started.

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Mr. and Mrs. Stringer welcomed their niece very heartily. The old gentleman had driven his wife to the station, in their pretty little basket phaeton, to meet her, and they enjoyed her pleasure on witnessing the beautiful sea views along the homeward route. They were glad to inform her that they were not quite without visitors at Sandycoombe, and they descanted on the agreeable little parties they would forthwith arrange in her honour. They were both of such hospitable dispositions that they were delighted to have an excuse for bringing their friends about them.

When they reached Sea View Lodge, as their elegant little mansion was called, Maggie found her old pleasant room again placed at her disposal.

"And the longer you occupy it, my dear, the better your uncle and I will be pleased," said her kind aunt; "I never did see the propriety of your leaving your poor old uncle and aunt for Annie, who has her husband, and is, I have no

doubt, thoroughly wrapped up in him. But I won't keep you talking; make haste down to dinner. I have asked Mrs. Oldham and her sons to come in for a little music this evening. One son is an invalid, and the other is here for company for him. They are just the people to suit you, Maggie—so very clever, and, as your uncle says, quite 'up' in all the ''ologies.'"

Maggie laughed as her aunt retreated, and then, having quickly made her toilette, which she took care should be a becoming one, she sat down in the easy chair by the window and looked away over the blue sea.

It was a beautiful day in April; the water sparkled gloriously in the sunshine, and the fishing-boats and pleasure-craft went dancing by on the light wavelets, their sails swelling out in the fresh breeze. Sea View Lodge was very close to the sea—so near that the beat of its never-ceasing pulse was heard upon the sand quite distinctly, and the far-off roar of the gathering on-coming waves was in the ears of the inmates of the Lodge day and night, consciously or unconsciously.

Maggie had come to Sandycoombe to get away from contemplating the infinite, and from those personal questions concerning her own soul which were haunting her, and which she was unwilling to meet. She now felt that she must not be much alone; conscience certainly pricked less when there were people about whom she could talk and listen to. She was very gay company herself. All the new friends of her relatives were delighted with the brilliance and sparkle and ability which Maggie Griffiths possessed; all the old ones thought she had never before seemed so pleasant. She made herself agreeable to young Mr. Oldham and two or three other young men, some clever, some merely commonplace, who were frequenters of Sea View Lodge. She affected a fancy for yachting and boating and

sea-bathing. Some of her leisure from these amusements she employed in studying music scientifically under the tuition of a German musician, who was thoroughly devoted to his art, and delighted to teach so intelligent and apt a pupil.

The pricks of conscience were certainly far less sharp at Sandycoombe than they had felt at Somerleigh. But they were not eradicated. Maggie sometimes rose in the middle of the beautiful summer nights, when there was scarcely any darkness all the solemn hours through, and sat by her window, watching the white lines of foam, and the revolving light in the lighthouse at the coastguard station on the opposite cliff, and the twinkling lights at the mastheads of the ships at anchor in the bay; and, as she watched, she was thinking, thinking, thinking, till she was absolutely tired of thought. Sometimes her eyes filled with tears, sometimes she battled against convictions, but constantly she heard the question in Owen's soft, weak voice, "How can you help loving Him, teacher?" Maggie went to West Lane Ragged Sunday-school to teach, but she had instead been taught the greatest lesson that she could ever learn—that her soul was too vast for earth to contain it.

CHAPTER X.

MAY'S MUSINGS.

HARRY DUNCAN was busier at his office that year than ever. He worked harder at the books and got through so much work that Mr. Burnard expressed his surprise, and his fear lest he was toiling beyond his strength. And he was busy at the ragged-school. The large addition to his class meant additional home-visiting; and little Owen's welfare was studiously attended to. Harry was here, there, and everywhere, and there was somewhat of restlessness in his movements.

Maggie had been gone a full month, when Harry one day said to his sister during dinner-time—

"Mrs. Burnard wants you to come to Rose Villa for a change, May. I think it may be managed—don't you, mother?"

"Certainly I do," said Mrs. Duncan. "It is very kind of Mrs. Burnard, and I should be glad for May to go; it would do her a world of good. There would be nice cheerful company for her with that sweet Mrs. Burnard and her bright pretty sister."

Harry coloured.

"But Miss Griffiths is not at home, mother," he said, "she is gone to pay her uncle and aunt at Sandycoombe a long visit. She has been away some weeks."

"How curious that you never told us, Harry!" observed May, looking up at him.

"How was I to know, May, that you would care particularly to hear it? You know so little of Miss Griffiths."

"Very little." May sighed gently. She had sometimes thought how kind it would have been in Maggie to have called oftener upon her. But she was not wont to think of herself, and she added, "What has become of her class, Harry?"

"I have taken the boys into mine."

"Then I should not think she meant to stay very long if she let you do that," said May.

"Let me do what?" inquired her brother.

"Why, take all those extra children."

"It was my own wish," observed Harry; "and I don't know that she will ever recommence Sunday-school work —at all events in West Lane;" and Harry sighed now, though he did not let May hear him.

"Well, it is queer, her going off like that," said May, looking intently at her brother; "I thought she was quite a fixture at Somerleigh, now that her sister is settled here."

"Perhaps, my dear, she did not care to be with a young husband and wife; it does not always answer," put in Mrs. Duncan, shrewdly. "It is not a thing I should advise."

"*Young* husband, mamma!" laughed May. "Why Mr. Burnard is at least forty!"

"Young as a husband nevertheless, and not perhaps a whit more pleasant for Miss Griffiths than if he were five-and-twenty. For my part, I think she has done very wisely." Was this the true explanation? Harry began to think it might be. "She has been with Mrs. Burnard many months now, and a change will do all parties good. May, will you write a note accepting Mrs. Burnard's invitation?"

"Why, mamma," said May, playfully, "I think, from what you have just said, it would be better for me to leave this young husband and wife alone."

"My dear," rejoined Mrs. Duncan, smiling, "a visitor is very different from a sister. A sister is naturally in and out and about as a visitor would not dream of being; and you, my poor dear, could never drop in upon any one by surprise."

"Yes, by all means go, May," said Harry.

And May went.

The visit did her good; a thorough and lasting friendship was formed between her and Annie Burnard, resting as it did on communion of thoughts and hopes on very many important subjects. May enjoyed, too, the garden, the flowers, and the tempting dainties which Annie provided for her; and books and music helped to fill each day delightfully. She stayed at Rose Villa five weeks, and not long after her return her sister Fanny came home to spend the summer vacation.

"What's the matter with Harry, May?" The two sisters were working busily together at some sewing.

"Is there anything the matter with him?" asked May.

"May, that isn't like you!" cried Fanny Duncan. "You know there is; and you, who are so much in his confidence, know what it is."

"Indeed he has not told me. He has been very busy lately, and I think has worked more than is good for him."

"That isn't the kind of thing I mean," persisted Fanny. "Is there any young lady that he cares about?"

"I really don't know," May answered.

"You might say what you think, and tell me who it is," suggested Fanny.

"I might if I knew, but I do not know that there is any one."

"'Tisn't all mere curiosity on my part," said Fanny, "Harry has been so good to us all that I think we must not stand in his way if he wishes to get settled at last. I have

had an increase of ten pounds this year; and that I can very well spare for mother and you, besides all those five pounds that I've put away every six months since I have been at Mrs. Norton's, and which are accumulating in the bank. For, as you know; Harry, dear unselfish old fellow, would not suffer you to take from me. If we each arranged to give you a certain sum, mother and you could get on very well. I am sure Mary and Rhoda are perfectly willing to help, and both their husbands are making lots of money."

"They have constantly sent us presents lately," said May; "both mother and myself have quite a little fund to fall back upon."

"I am very glad to hear it," remarked energetic, systematic Fanny. "I shall speak to Harry, and see if it is as I think."

"I don't think I should, if I were you; it might pain him."

"May, I begin to think you know something."

"I know nothing," persisted May, resolutely; "and it would not be kind in me to let my surmisings take shape in your mind as well as my own, for I am certain Harry would not like it. And pray don't say anything direct to him. You can tell him what you have just told me as to money matters, and if you like you can laughingly give him good advice to get married; but don't do anything more, Fanny."

Fanny looked at May; her earnest eyes spoke eloquently on behalf of her darling brother; and the elder sister rejoined—

"Of course I won't, if you think it would grieve or annoy him. I should be the last to want to do either."

After this conversation with Fanny, May's peace of mind was very much disturbed. She had told herself before that Harry surely was not well, not happy. She had studied his face, his manner; she had asked herself again and again what *was* amiss, and she had shrunk from answering.

Fanny's quickness had suggested what May could not bear to believe; and for many reasons. May Duncan was but mortal, and hitherto she had been as it were the proprietress of her beloved brother's tenderest affection. Much as the good and devoted son loved his mother, and perfect as was their comfort in each other, May knew, and Harry knew, that there was a unity of feeling between themselves, a community of interest, a similarity of taste, of desire, of opinion, that did not exist so fully amongst any other members of the family. Harry had petted May, had taught her, had counselled her, had chosen her books, had guided her employments, and May's very life seemed wrapped up in Harry's love. Had she a rival now? There was a sting added to the bitterness of giving him up which other sisters had not to feel. She could never dream of that fuller human love which should recompense for the loss of any brother, however dear. That hope was denied to May; and she felt her loss now as she had never felt it before. This, too, was a fierce combat with self, in which she could not call Harry to her aid. But a greater and a stronger than Harry was at hand to help her to put down self, and "He who sticketh closer than a brother" would ultimately give her the victory.

Sometimes even now she believed herself mistaken. She felt this to be the case when Harry brought her her weekly offering of flowers—surely they were never so fair and so sweet as they were this summer—and he looked so happy when her pleasure expressed itself in her gentle and loving face, as it was wont to do so fully. She doubted, too, when Harry joined them in several pleasant drives, for he seemed to be once more his own gay merry self.

"I shall not be at home to dinner, mother," Harry said, one day later in the summer, and after Fanny had gone back to her situation.

"Indeed; where are you going, my son?"

"I feel as if I must have a glimpse of the sea," he replied; "so I have asked for a holiday to run down to Sandycoombe." May looked at him anxiously. "I wish I could take you with me, darling," he said, kissing her.

"I suppose you will see Miss Griffiths before you return?"

"My dear child, it is not in the least likely. I am going to have a look at the sea, not at Miss Griffiths."

Harry Duncan believed he was speaking the truth, and yet he was conscious that there was a lurking desire in his heart to see Miss Griffiths.

"Her sister might wish to send something to her," suggested May.

"They do not know I am going there," he rejoined. "I may not come back till the last train, if the sea is as beautiful as I expect; so don't wait up for me, dear ones. I have the key all right."

How often May thought of that day! If she had had any doubt before, she had none now. Was Maggie Griffiths likely to make Harry happy? That was the question she tried to solve. She feared not. If she had only been a woman of Christian principle, her firm strong nature would be able to render him just the help he needed; but as it was, May guessed, and rightly too, that Maggie would desire to check much of Harry's peculiar work amongst the poor, if indeed—which was altogether unlikely—she would deign in her proud beauty to think of him with love at all. It was unbearable to May that her idolised brother should sue and not succeed. "Perhaps it will be all settled before he comes home," thought May. "How strange it would be to have a sister-in-law! But I will try to look forward hopefully. If Harry is only made truly happy, I am sure I could love her."

May and her mother were seated at a somewhat late tea when the key turned in the front door and Harry entered. Both ladies looked at him, and both exclaimed, almost involuntarily—

"Why, what's the matter, Harry?"

"The matter?" he said, smiling, and advancing to the small mirror above the mantelpiece. "Well, I suppose I do look rather white. I will have just one cup of tea and be off to bed. The sea-air was very strong, and I had a short sail. I don't think it altogether agreed with me."

"What a pity!" said his mother, leaving the room to fetch a teacup.

"Harry, what *is* it?" May asked.

"Nothing much, my pet."

"It is enough to have made your heart ache, Harry."

"And my head, May. Forgive me, dear, if I would rather not talk to-night."

"You will confide in me to-morrow, then?" questioned May.

"My dear child, I really have nothing worth the name of a confidence—nothing I think best to say to any one, even to you, May. There is an old proverb we both of us believe in, dear—'Least said soonest mended.'"

His manner, as firm as it was gentle, and the entrance of their mother, stopped May's further questioning. He drank the tea, smiling and making so light of his malady as to reassure his mother, and then went to bed.

May spent the greatest part of the night in earnest prayerful thought on Harry's behalf, while her brother lay tossing for an hour or two, bitterly reproaching himself for what he feared was wilful folly. He *had* seen Maggie Griffiths; but he would rather not have seen her. She was the centre of attraction to a set of idlers on the beach, some of them fast-looking young men. He was bitterly disap-

"There passed his little boat a beautiful yacht, with Maggie on board, attended by her knot of idlers, and two other ladies somewhat *outré* in dress."

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pointed in her. Of course he had bowed to her in passing the group, and she had returned his salutation with the most frigid greeting imaginable, a greeting which appeared to Harry to warn him not to approach any nearer. It might be only fancy, but Harry thought he heard one of her companions inquire as he bowed, "Who on earth is that? Why, 'he looks like an ancient and most quiet watchman!'" and there certainly was a merry laugh amongst them all as he passed on.

He took a boat, and went out for an hour's sail, to while away the time till the next homeward train, and as he returned there passed his little boat a beautiful yacht, with Maggie on board, attended by her knot of idlers, and two other ladies somewhat *outré* in dress. Harry did not look towards them, but he distinctly heard one young fellow exclaim, as he took the cigar from his lips, "There is your ultra-fashionable friend, Miss Griffiths; shall we ask him on board?" and there was a laugh again at his expense.

If he could only have heard Maggie's answer!

"I am in earnest, Mr. Taylor, when I say there isn't a man who does more good in all Somerleigh than Mr. Duncan, whom you *call*, and I have the honour to know *is*, my friend."

Maggie wondered at herself no less than Harry would have wondered at her when she had spoken; but she had silenced the laugh abruptly, and no one alluded again to Harry Duncan.

CHAPTER XI.

AT HOME IN FRASER'S CLOSE.

THROUGH all the months of winter they kept little Jessie in the Children's Hospital. Euphemia Macdonald—for as such Effie Burnard was known to the officials there—came very seldom indeed to inquire for her, and still more seldom did she desire to go up into the ward and see her child. But old Bridget Macarthy was a very constant visitor; and to Bridget each week little Jessie repeated the Bible story which she had learnt from her kind teacher, Nurse McAlpine, till the old Irishwoman declared, with much humour and unction, that "in time her darlint Jessie would make her as larned as a praist, indade she would, wid her varses, and her histories, and those swate little sarmints which she could prache out of her own blessed little head."

Mr. Burnard did not forget the child. Every week either he or Annie wrote a kind letter to her, always enclosing some gift, and every month the funds of the Children's Hospital received a donation of five pounds, that they might not suffer from the protracted stay of the little visitor.

Committee, doctors, matron, nurses, and patients all conspired in the wish to keep Jessie amongst them, but the rules of the institution of course forbade it after she was restored to health. Seven months of careful nursing, excellent food, good air, sound sleep, and gentle exercise, had wrought wonders in the puny child, and her mind had developed healthily and proportionately with her body. She had formerly been too "'cute" and knowing, far too much of a little business-woman for her tender years, too

well acquainted with the rough ways of the world; just as vice and misery and want cause hundreds and thousands of dear children every year to be precociously initiated into what it were best they should never know.

But now Jessie had learnt sweet childlike occupations, and her heart was stored with the truths of the Bible. In these months of mingled suffering and joy, of pain and pleasure, the little Flower of the Grassmarket had expanded under the warm beams of the Sun of Righteousness. Jessie had become a sincere Christian. Her desire was to live for God's glory, and daily in every act and word to serve her Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Jessie shared now the convalescent privileges which were so attractive, and of which she had heard so much. She went out in a perambulator till she was quite strong, and then she took short walks in the pleasant Meadows with her little companions. She sat swinging in the sunshine in the hospital garden, and lay basking contentedly on the grass during the long afternoons of summer. She cried very sadly, poor little girl, at the death of "my bonnie dearie Aleck," as she was wont to call the dark-eyed boy who pined gradually away of his incurable disease. She interested herself in every new case that entered the hospital, especially those that came into "our ward," as she called it. She made herself useful to Nurse McAlpine and Nurse Glencross by amusing the smallest children, and Tommy and she were the very best of friends.

About this time there came a letter from Mr. Burnard asking the matron's advice as to how best to help little Jessie when she left the hospital. Mr. Burnard had been made too well acquainted with the character of Euphemia Macdonald, and her apparent carelessness in regard to her child, to think it prudent to entrust her with money. Would the matron recommend a minister or Sunday-school teacher

who would kindly undertake to be his medium, to supply money every week for the child's support, and who would also attend to her being sent regularly to school, week-days and Sundays?

"You can't do better," suggested Mrs. McAlpine, "than entrust the matter to Miss Lorimer; I am sure she would undertake it, and she knows all about such cases."

Miss Lorimer was the daughter of Mrs. McAlpine's late minister; the lady was equal to Mrs. McAlpine's opinion of her, and at once entered into correspondence with the Burnards. Jessie, it was arranged, should attend her class at the Sunday-school. Miss Lorimer would hand over the payments for her at a day-school, and she would also give her mother the weekly sum to provide for the little girl's maintenance.

Jessie could not bear to leave the hospital, where she had so many dear friends, and in which she had received more kindness than from any one else in the world save old Bridget Macarthy. But she had no hesitation about going back to Fraser's Close and to her mother.

"We a' hae to just do our duty, nursie," she said to Mrs. McAlpine, who was mourning over her leaving them; "and I want to mak' my mither love me. I dinna ken why she doesna love me yet."

This was, indeed, the pious task which the little Christian had set herself—to make her mother love her. Poor darling, she could not measure that fierce hate against her fellows, the stubborn resistance to the best promptings of her woman's nature, which raged in that poor mother's heart. The child knew not the wretched circumstances of her birth. She was happily hopeful; if she could but coax her mother to leave off the dreadful whisky that made her so mad and furious, Jessie believed she might be a loving and kind mother.

The parting scene at the hospital, when "Euphemia Macdonald" came to fetch away her child, was very painful. Mrs. McAlpine was sobbing, and Mrs. Glencross, though she tried to cheer up everybody else, kept getting blinded with her fast-coming tears, which she dashed away in haste. Jessie clung to her good nurse, her first teacher of the Bible and of heavenly truths, and thanked her till her sweet little voice was choked with emotion. All the animate and inanimate objects—the docile cat, the pretty little canary, the saucy Poll, the plants, the pictures, the toys—came in for a share of the lingering leave-taking. Every child gave Jessie something of more or less value, from the little basket itself which contained these gifts, down to the scrap of tinted paper or solitary comfit placed in it by little hands which had nothing else to bestow; and that little basket was a very cornucopia of love, and more precious and sweetly-laden in God's sight than the richest treasures offered without that true prompting of affection or respect, which can alone make gifts valuable. So the transplanted flower, fairer than it had ever been before, went back to the old dingy garden in which it had first bloomed, to delight it with its freshness and beauty.

The sorrow of the hospital was balanced by the joy of the Grassmarket.

Grisly old men who sadly neglected their ablutions put out their heads from many a window at various heights to welcome Jessie back again; the children gathered about her in a body, admiring her sweet little face as she looked at them out of those lovely blue eyes of hers with a yearning pity and love that had come to her since she had heard of Jesus. The women, and many of the men, caught her up and kissed her; and Bridget Macarthy, who of course had met her just outside the hospital, accompanied her on her triumphal march.

The new denizens—and much of the population of the Grassmarket is migratory—were curious to know what all this honour meant paid to a little humbly-dressed child, and were duly informed, in many cases as if they ought to have known better than to ask, that "our wee bit Flower o' the Grassmarket is come back again." Miss Lorimer had taken kind care that a good meal should be ready for Jessie at her old home that evening, and Bridget Macarthy, and one or two of the dearest of Jessie's little Grassmarket friends, were invited to Fraser's Close to enjoy it with her.

And so the little lassie came back again, going to school every day, and making rapid progress with her lessons; and on the Sabbath she sat week after week in Miss Lorimer's class. The other scholars were older girls, quiet, well-behaved children, whose parents were well-to-do in life. But they had been told something of little Jessie's history by their wise teacher, and they welcomed her kindly amongst them; while she, by her quickness and her diligence in learning her catechism and verses, and her docile, gentle, loving ways, won gradually the hearts of her teacher and fellow-scholars, as she had already won hearts in the hospital.

"Jessie, when are you going to take out your papers again?" asked her mother one day.

"Tak' out my papers, mither! I didna think I must tak' to selling papers."

"Idle child!" said her mother, crossly. "That's what comes of your staying in the hospital so long, and being made so much of. You are above helping your mother now. I want the money, Jessie, and you are to sell the papers."

"But, mither, will I no go to school?"

"Yes, go to school if you want to, and sell the papers when you come out, and in the morning before you go in."

"But, mither, do ye think Miss Lorimer will like it?"

"What do I care about Miss Lorimer?" said Effie Burnard, sharply. "Do as I bid you."

"But, mither——"

"Look here, Jessie," said her mother, in the same tone, only that she sneered as well, "you read your beautiful Bible, don't you? I see you with it every day in your hand."

"Ay, mither."

"Well, does that Bible teach you to obey your mother or to disobey?"

"Honour thy father and thy mither, that thy days may be lang upon the land whilk the Lord thy God gie'th thee," said Jessie, reverently.

"Well, then, that's all you've got to do; only mind, there's to be no telling Miss Lorimer."

Jessie reluctantly began her old work. She was unwilling, not because she disliked to work, but because she knew that Mr. Burnard was paying a sufficient sum for her maintenance, and that he intended she should not do anything but go to school diligently and spend her spare time in play.

For some weeks the child stood again with her papers in her arms, as she had done nearly twelve months before when the accident happened, holding them out to the passers-by in the much-frequented thoroughfare in front of the Post-office, and watched at intervals by her mother to see that she was pushing the sale. The profits were regularly delivered over to that mother, and as regularly spent by her in whisky; and the little "flower" began to droop again under the exposure, and the cruel, harsh treatment she often received when Effie Burnard was intoxicated.

"I didna ken ye sold the papers till yester e'en," said one of the girls at the Sunday-school as they were sitting in class.

Poor little Jessie, how painfully she coloured, and how anxiously she looked at Miss Lorimer!

"What, Jessie! What is that I hear?"

Jessie was silent, and the girl who had spoken, finding it was a secret, good-naturedly tried to pass it over; but their teacher was firm, and insisted on knowing all. She walked home from school with Jessie, and said to the child's mother—

"Mrs. Macdonald, a girl in my class has been telling me that Jessie is in the streets selling papers. I have come to tell you that Mr. Burnard will not give his money for her support except on the conditions which I read to you, and to which you agreed."

"Mr. Burnard—Mr. Edward Burnard," exclaimed Effie, excitedly—"who wants Edward Burnard's money? I don't. Let him keep his money. He shall not interfere between me and my child."

"Mrs. Macdonald," said Miss Lorimer, kindly and calmly, "think it over for a week whether you wish to give up all the advantages Mr. Burnard offers for your child. I will call to know your decision at the end of that time. Come, Jessie—come home with me."

Her mother made no objection, and the child went gladly. And after this, Jessie not unfrequently spent the Sabbath at the house of her kind friend and teacher. There was an end to Jessie's selling papers, for Effie Burnard, knowing well that the sum her brother paid for the child could never be earned by the small profits of the little newsvendors, made a virtue of necessity, and gave up all the claim she considered she possessed to her child's capacity for earning money.

But the little Flower of the Grassmarket was reluctantly obliged to confess that her mother seemed to care for her as little as she had ever cared, and that she had made no

perceptible progress in exciting that "mither's love" which she so coveted. Jessie, young as she was, had a mission of love to poor old Biddy. The old woman was about with her cart by day, and often late into the evening. Her most frequent stand was at the corner of North Bridge and High Street, under the shadow of the Tron Church, where she often, especially on Saturday evenings, did a thriving trade. The keen black eyes of the little Irishwoman scanned the streets up and down for a peep at her "darlint little Flower," as she called Jessie, and very, very often the child lingered near the barrow, holding such talks with its owner as would have astonished many a passer-by. Biddy's priest, Father Moore, was a good man, and by no means neglected the spiritual and temporal welfare of his flock, and he had warned his children faithfully many and many a time against the sin of drunkenness.

But, when little Jessie talked to Biddy, she made her dislike to do wrong simply "because of Jesus." Jesus, the eternal friend of little children, was so constantly in Jessie's thoughts, she loved Him so dearly that to grieve Him willingly seemed the greatest of all woes, and in measure she was the means of awakening old Biddy to the same state of mind. Biddy tried hard to break off from her old bad habits "because of Jesus," and began to be looked upon in Fraser's Close as an altered woman.

CHAPTER XII.

SICK UNTO DEATH.

IN the autumn of that year, while Maggie still mingled in the gaieties of Sandycoombe, where the "season" was now at its height, and while Harry Duncan worked as hard as ever, and his sister May still watched him anxiously, a grievous epidemic assailed the land. Small-pox, that grievous malady which had been kept successfully "at bay" for so many years by Dr. Jenner's wise discovery, reasserted its power.

"It really seems as if it had become somewhat of an epidemic again in England," said Mr. Burnard, thoughtfully, as he sat after breakfast, finishing his morning paper, before he went to the foundry.

"What! are there more cases?" inquired Annie.

"Yes, dear; they are beginning to build, or, rather, erect temporary small-pox hospitals. That has a sad sound, has it not? I trust Somerleigh may escape lightly. Ah," he added, glancing farther down his paper, at another paragraph, "they advise, I see, that we have a hospital, for there are already seven cases of confirmed small-pox in merely the West Lane district."

"What a good thing dear Maggie is away!" said Annie. "For I expect, if she had been at home, nothing of this kind would have prevented her teaching as usual. I was so tried about her leaving us, and now I see all was for the best."

"Once more, dear little wife, I find you acknowledging that," observed Edward Burnard, smiling, as he gave her his "*good*-morning" kiss. "Indeed, I am not sure that I ever

listened to a complaint from these dear lips without rejoicing in a thanksgiving from them afterwards, in relation to the very self-same thing."

"I know I am often very foolish, Edward."

"Not when you give thanks, darling."

"But you say yourself my complaints come first."

"Oh! not always, dear one. But I must be off."

"I shall write to Maggie to-day," said Annie, "and I shall tell her she had better stay at Sandycoombe for the present."

"Yes, it would be as well, perhaps," agreed Edward Burnard; "and yet I don't know that I should say anything of the kind, dear. If Maggie is in her right place there, I hope she will stay; if not, I had rather she returned to Somerleigh. We should not be of those who are scared by an epidemic into such a state as not to know right from wrong. Not unfrequently people who allow themselves to be ruled by their fears are attacked in the very places to which they flee for safety, or in which they stay to be out of danger."

"Perhaps I had better not say anything then," said Annie; "I may frighten her needlessly about ourselves."

"You are right, dearest; you can do no good, and may do harm by giving her such a caution against returning."

A few weeks later than this, Mr. Burnard said to his wife—

"I am very anxious about Harry Duncan, Annie; he believes it is his duty to go about amongst the poor at this crisis, and he has asked me to grant him the month's holiday I offered him a while ago, because I thought he looked so badly."

"What have you told him, Edward?"

"I put everything before him concerning his mother and sisters, especially May, in as strong a light as I thought

myself justified in doing, and then he told me what he had heard—that there are wretched beings dying in Somerleigh without a single creature near them, and that many receive only occasional attention from the nurses of the small-pox hospital. That hospital itself is too full to receive any more, and they have taken that unoccupied house in London Street, and are fitting it up as speedily as possible in order to provide further accommodation. Harry proposes to occupy a room in that house directly it is ready, and to give himself up entirely to work amongst the sick. He says he must of course shun all his friends, and even his own family to a great extent."

"It is grand of him, I think," remarked Annie, her eyes kindling; "he is a Christian hero."

"He is, truly," said Edward Burnard.

"And how did you settle it, dear?"

"Well, I must tell you exactly, for it shows the generous, scrupulous character of the man. 'I don't know,' Harry said, 'that I ought to ask for this month, Mr. Burnard, after refusing your great kindness when you offered it to me; but I do it on behalf of the poor—and you know I am always bold for them. However, if I cannot see my way to give up my new work when that time has elapsed—and, unless the plague has by that time stayed, I know I shall not—you must promise me not to wait any longer, but take some one else in my place.'"

"Of course you won't, though," put in Annie, quickly.

"I told him," said Edward Burnard, "that my giving up my clerk was as nothing compared to his taking his life in his hand for our townspeople, and that he must let me act as I deemed best; that I could not spare him altogether so easily as he thought I could, and that, in short, whenever he was ready, he should find his stool waiting for him in my office."

"That was nice, and just like you, Edward; and of course his salary won't stop either?"

"Don't you know, love, that people's salaries don't 'stop' while they remain in my employ."

"Shall you see Harry again, Edward?" asked Annie, kissing him in token of her approval of his part in the matter.

"Yes, he is coming to-morrow to square up one or two little matters, and to initiate me into two or three mysteries in his accounts which it is possible I may not understand."

"Then tell him," said the young wife, eagerly, "that I will see Mrs. Duncan and May very, very often, and that I will be sure to write to him if I think there is anything he ought to know as to their health."

"Is that a wise message, my Annie?"

"I thought he might be anxious about them."

"I quite expect he will be almost too busy to be anxious; but he will at all events be delighted to hear that you will see after his mother and sister."

"The house in London Street is opened," said Mr. Burnard next day; "and who do you think was the first patient taken there this morning?"

"Not Frank—Frank Drew," replied Annie, her cheeks blanching.

"No, none of our children—Maggie's little favourite, Owen Roberts."

"Oh, she *will* be sorry!" said Annie.

"Tell her about it, and tell her how nobly Harry Duncan is acting; such things do people good to hear, if they have any hearts at all, and Maggie is by no means deficient in that kind of sympathy which a grand self-sacrifice enkindles."

And so it came to pass that two or three days afterwards Harry received a delicate little pink-tinted note from Sandy-

coombe, pleasantly scented with attar of roses, which Maggie always kept in her desk, and thus it ran :—

"Dear Mr. Duncan,—How can I express to you my sense of the noble position you have taken in regard to the dreadful scourge now afflicting poor Somerleigh? Annie tells me that dear little Owen is amongst the sufferers. I enclose some money; and please always feel that my purse is at your further disposal with regard to him. If he can bear it, give him my love, and say how much I hope he will do well and get over his ailment.

"Yours sincerely,
"MAGGIE GRIFFITHS."

That note came like a ray of sunshine into a dark cell, or a glass of water to thirst-parched lips, or a well-beloved melody of fatherland to an exile's ears, or a grasp of the hand from one returned who it was feared was dead. The little missive was pressed for a moment to Harry's lips, and he went bravely on in the strength of it, as well as in that higher strength which, had all human sympathy failed him, would have enabled him to lay down his life for his brethren.

Little Owen's case was a bad one. He had the virulent type of the disorder. Harry learnt for the first time of the different kinds of small-pox, and by degrees he became used to the varied symptoms. He was one of a band of heroes and heroines who gave themselves up to the work of nursing the sick, comforting the dying, and soothing the bereaved.

Amongst these self-denying ones were many of the town missionaries, and some clergymen, several Dissenting ministers, a few district visitors, and a lovely young Quakeress, who was one of the most fearless as well as the most unassuming of them all. As it was said of Florence Nightingale in the Crimea, that even her shadow was welcome to the sick soldier, and her presence his greatest comfort, so might it have been repeated with truth in the small-pox hospitals of Somerleigh concerning Dora Johnson. Her

tall graceful form, in softest robes, glided quietly in and out; her gentle voice soothed the restless sufferer with some well-chosen text of Holy Writ; her sweet delicate face, with its fair wavy hair modestly arranged, was to the miserable victims of this fell disorder like the face of an angel, and they "took knowledge of her that she had been with Jesus."

No case was too trying for her calm, brave, unshrinking nature to nurse, no impenitent raving from parched black lips growing rigid in death scared her away. To the ignorant she upheld her Saviour and theirs upon the cross that they might look and live; to the oppressed and dying Christian she whispered of the sweet comfort they possessed in their mutual Lord. And after the distemper had ceased its violence, she modestly and unostentatiously pursued her quiet line of duty as hitherto, followed by the blessings of ransomed souls and by the "peace which passeth all understanding."

Little Owen became worse as the days passed by, and he could hardly bear to let Harry be absent from his side. The affection between them was perfect. Harry had no fears whatever for the child's future. He had sat so long at the feet of the Master that, if he died, it would only be that Christ should lift him to a still nearer, dearer place. It would only be that he should henceforth follow the Lamb whithersoever He should lead him in the Eternal Paradise of God. But the gold was to be yet further purified ere it shone "as the stars in the brightness of the firmament."

Little Owen tossed and moaned and cried piteously in the height of the fever, and Harry soothed him and watched over him with a care and tenderness that seemed untiring.

"Shall I relieve thee a while? I am sure thou must want sleep," said Dora to Harry one day, gently approaching the bed where the child was lying in a semi-unconscious state.

"He will not miss thee. Pray take some rest; thou art looking very tired thyself."

Harry was more tired and exhausted than he knew at first when he accepted Miss Johnson's kind offer. He went to his room at the top of the house, but he could hardly manage to reach it, his legs were so tottering, and he felt so faint. But he undressed, which he had not done for three nights previously, and soon fell asleep.

It was the morning, but neither the busy life in the street below, nor all the noise in the house itself, could wake him. At last the town missionary, sent up by Dora, opened the door late in the afternoon, entered the room and looked at Harry, but did not rouse him. Descending again, he said to her—

"He is lying almost like one dead—he was utterly exhausted, poor fellow! Miss Johnson, we have to thank you for being so quick to see this. I think you have saved him an illness. Let him sleep all night, and by the morning I expect he will be quite refreshed."

"He is not sickening surely?" said Dora.

"Oh, no!" answered the missionary, who was quick now, after so much experience, to detect the signs of the disease. "He seems simply over-fatigued—nothing worse, I believe."

So all that night Dora took Harry's place by little Owen. The child did not regain his entire consciousness, but once or twice called out suddenly in his delirium for "Mr. Duncan." That was a solemn night in the London Street Hospital, for three human beings passed away in the course of it. Had Dora Johnson been timid, she might not have been able to bear the experiences of it, but it was not the first by very many that she had spent amongst the dying; and she rose now and then from Owen to visit another sufferer and smooth his pillows, or to bestow the cooling drink.

Harry woke partially once through those long hours and found it was night; he did not rouse himself thoroughly, but went to sleep again. At last, however, the morning sunshine called him from his bed. Presently there was a tap at the door, and the missionary, who had called in again at the hospital, and who felt a little anxious about Harry, entered. He was delighted to find that his surmise was correct, and that he was now nearly ready to resume his work.

"How shabby it was of me," said Harry to Dora Johnson when, seeing him enter, she rose to leave, "to take such advantage of your kindness, and sleep so long!"

Dora smiled pleasantly.

"I am very glad thou hast done so," she said; "I could see yesterday that rest was an absolute necessity for thee, else, perchance, I might not have offered it. It becomes us workers to take care of each other, as well as of the sick."

Harry looked anxiously at little Owen.

"I fear there is no hope," said Dora.

"Has he wanted me, Miss Johnson?"

"Not consciously," she answered, "though even in the restlessness of his fever he was calling for thee. Thou art very dear to the child, Harry Duncan."

"He is one of my Sunday-school class," Harry said, "and a true disciple of the Lord Jesus; I both love him and honour him."

"The little lamb will be folded perchance ere night," observed Dora. "May he have a peaceful transit. Farewell."

"If ever there was an angel of mercy in human form," said the missionary, who had been watching her retreating form, as Dora closed the door, "Miss Johnson is one."

"I am sure she is," responded Harry, warmly.

Late in the evening of that day Harry sat alone beside Owen. None of his relatives had been to see him; they were too frightened at his complaint. There were many other patients in this room of the hospital amongst whom the nurses were busy, but the corner in which Owen's bed was placed was a sort of recess, which shut it off in some degree from the rest of the apartment. Presently the child began to talk in a low faint whisper, so faint that Harry was obliged to lean over him to catch the words.

"Who is it?" he asked.

"Your teacher, Harry Duncan. Owen, do you not know my voice?"

"Yes, dear Mr. Duncan. Oh, I am 'sick unto death!'" They were touching words to come from the parched lips and the exhausted body. "Sick unto death!" he repeated. "Do you think that I am dying, Mr. Duncan?"

"I think you are, Owen; but you are not afraid to die, are you?"

"Oh, no! He died that we might live," said the child. "I want to go, I am so weary of being so sick. Is it not wrong to want to go?"

"Wrong? Oh, no!"

"You said she sent her love to me."

"Who, Owen? Miss Griffiths?"

"Yes," said the boy; "and I want to send my love to her."

"I will give it," promised Harry.

"Tell me about the heavy laden," said Owen.

"'Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'"

"Go on, teacher."

"'Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.'"

"There's more, teacher," whispered Owen, when Harry paused.

"'For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.'"

"Tell her I've proved it," said Owen. "Teacher, dear teacher," he added presently, "I cannot breathe! Oh, is this dying?"

"Yes, my dear Owen. But God says to you, 'Fear not, for I am with thee.'"

The child sank into a stupor. Harry at first thought he was dead, but the breath came feebly from time to time in slight spasms. Once more he revived a little to ask for Harry's hand, which he grasped with convulsive tightness.

"I shall soon be well now, teacher. Dear, dear Mr. Duncan," said the loving little fellow, "say that about sickness."

"'And the inhabitants shall not say, I am sick,'" repeated Harry. "'The people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity.' 'Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty'——"

"He is come, teacher!"

The child fell back dead. Had he not begun his true full-orbed life? Whither his teacher could not follow him, save in thought, into the sweet mysteries of heaven, little Owen had departed. The King in His beauty had come Himself for His little loving subject. "Sick unto death." Oh, darling boy, "this sickness is not unto death, but that the Son of God might be glorified thereby."

CHAPTER XIII.

STRICKEN.

HARRY DUNCAN arranged the funeral of little Owen. He ordered everything neat and nice as he knew Maggie Griffiths would desire, and on the little plate upon the coffin he had added to his name and age the words, "Sunday scholar in West Lane Sunday-school," and the following Scripture verse, "Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure and whether it be right."

The small-pox funerals had to take place very speedily after death, and within forty-eight hours of little Owen's departure he was laid in the grave "in sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection." Harry walked with the boy's mother and old Mrs. Wilkinson to the cemetery. It was a very quiet funeral, and the autumn wind swept around the place, sheltered though it was, and brought down the leaves in showers at their feet. Harry felt very cold when he reached London Street again, but he took a cup of strong hot coffee to do away with all ill-effects of standing at the grave, and prepared to sit up for the night with a man who was very ill.

Several times during that night he felt miserably sick and faint, but he battled against it, charging himself with being nervous and foolish. But incipient small-pox is not to be cured by ever so resolute an exercise of a strong will, and when the doctor came his round early in the morning, he noticed at once how Harry staggered as he rose to meet him, and said, firmly—

"My dear sir, you are ill—no more fit to sit by this man than he is to sit by you. Go to bed at once."

"Not here, doctor. Don't let me add to the other work of this place. Besides, my mother and sister would never forgive me; and May can't come to me, you know."

"Stop, then, a few minutes, and I will drive you home," said the doctor.

"Have I the ——" Harry hesitated.

"Yes, I think so. You know the symptoms too well yourself to be in doubt for long."

So Harry went home, stricken down in his strength. Before he was too ill to think of anything, he besought his mother not to alarm his sisters. Fanny, the only one who could have safely come to them—for the married ones had little children—was abroad with her pupils and their parents. May, it was arranged, should direct the housekeeping; their charwoman should come and stay in the house as much as possible to help the young servant, and Mrs. Duncan of course gave herself up to attendance on her sick son. Yet, in spite of it all, they were short-handed, and, the house being altogether avoided by their ordinary acquaintance, the charge was beginning to be too much for Mrs. Duncan, and May was frightened on her account. Harry, too, was dangerously ill, and after a very little time the fever raged high, and he grew delirious.

"May, did you know anything about it?" said Mrs. Duncan, coming into the parlour on the third day of his illness, and looking at her daughter earnestly.

"About what, mother?" inquired May, guessing before her mother could answer.

"Why, about his caring so much for Maggie Griffiths. I wish you had told me, May."

"I know very, very little about it, mother," said May, feeling keenly at that moment her brother's neglect to entrust her—his darling sister—with the state of his heart respecting Maggie.

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About eleven o'clock, a cab came to the door, and set own Maggie and her box. The servant girl, directed by ay, introduced Maggie to the sitting-room.

"How is he?" were the first words she spoke. "Any etter?"

"Very ill," said May; "no better."

Maggie began to cry. It was of no use. She had inended to be brave and even playful, but marking the agony May's sad face, she could not restrain her tears. May not consider them by any means out of place.

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"Well, there can be no doubt about it," observed his mother. "It grieves me to hear him, poor dear fellow; he is calling piteously upon her. I wonder if she knows anything about his illness. I wish you could hear him, May, and then you would understand."

How often May longed to be with him; but, now that *he* was ill who used to carry her, she could not even have the changes to which she was accustomed. Still, that was a small privation compared to this compulsory separation from Harry.

By the last post that evening the following note arrived for Mrs. Duncan:—

"Sandycoombe, Sept. 24th, 18—.

"Dear Mrs. Duncan,—Please let me come and help you. I shall be with you the morning after you receive this. Mr. Duncan need not see me, and if he does will very likely think I am one of his sisters come to nurse him. It is all my doing that this has happened, for, if I had been at my post, I should have been with poor little Owen Roberts instead of your noble-hearted son. Do show me you forgive me for bringing all this sorrow upon you by accepting my help. At least I can perhaps cheer May.—Believe me, dear Mrs. Duncan, yours, sincerely and sorrowfully,

"MAGGIE GRIFFITHS."

"Then she *does* care for him," thought May.

"My dear, what shall we do? What would Mrs. Burnard say? We can't allow anything of the kind," said poor Mrs. Duncan.

"And what would Harry say if she took the small-pox of him? For, even if she recovered, her beauty would probably suffer," rejoined May. "No, mamma; I will see her when she comes, and send her away again."

"Yes, do, dear."

The next morning, poor Mrs. Duncan, tired out with her long night watch, and the incessant ravings of her dear Harry about Maggie Griffiths, felt as if she could gladly

accept help from any one. Yet both she and May agreed that such help must not be accepted from Maggie.

About eleven o'clock, a cab came to the door, and set down Maggie and her box. The servant girl, directed by May, introduced Maggie to the sitting-room.

"How is he?" were the first words she spoke. "Any better?"

"Very ill," said May; "no better."

Maggie began to cry. It was of no use. She had intended to be brave and even playful, but marking the agony in May's sad face, she could not restrain her tears. May did not consider them by any means out of place.

"My mother is very much obliged," said May, "but of course we could never think of accepting your offer."

"Oh, May, don't be against me; do take my part. It is only common justice that I should help your mother."

"What would Mrs. Burnard say?"

"She knows I am here," said Maggie.

"What would Harry himself say?"

"That can't be helped," replied Maggie, humbly; "he might find I was better than nobody. I can at least spare your mother and his, May."

May was astonished. She had never heard the proud-spirited Miss Griffiths speak in this tone before.

"I mean because of the danger to you," she said.

"Do listen," returned Maggie; "I was re-vaccinated more than a month ago to please uncle, and, indeed, because I thought it prudent myself, and the doctor told me I might really feel myself safe now, it had taken so well. Now, you will let me stay and help you?"

May rang a little bell beside her a certain number of times, and her mother appeared; it was the signal appointed between them.

"Mamma," said May, after greetings had been exchanged, "I think Miss Griffiths must stay."

Maggie looked at her gratefully.

"My dear!" Mrs. Duncan looked much more surprised than displeased, as she uttered those words emphatically.

"So she will come up to you presently, when she has changed her dress."

"Do explain to her, May," said Mrs. Duncan, as she left the room.

"Oh, I had forgotten; yes, mamma." May wondered how she should manage it. "Will you mind having to wait on yourself very much, Miss Griffiths, and would it be very disagreeable to you to take the second bed in my room? I don't go upstairs at present, and when I do, I hope I shall not be in your way."

"Certainly not, and I hope when you come, I shall sleep too soundly to disturb you."

"Mary will show you your room then, but will you come to me before you go to Harry? I have something that must be said."

"Certainly." Maggie's heart beat fast; she could scarcely have told why.

A very few minutes had elapsed, as it seemed to poor May, who was trying hard to find a suitable way in which to frame her communication, before Maggie returned. She wore a soft grey dress, cheerfully trimmed with blue, a dress of exactly the material and style for a nurse, since there was absolutely nothing to worry or disturb the sick person in rustle or tint.

"I am delighted with my quarters," she said, cheerily, "I had no idea you had such a pretty view in the house. The glimpse of Sussex Hill is charming. Now, what is it? Will you let me call you May? and do say Maggie."

"Of course I will," responded May, "if you wish it.

What I have to say is so very difficult to be said, Miss Grif—, I mean, Maggie. My poor dear Harry is delirious, and in his delirium—which began yesterday, before your letter came, but not long before—he has very often mentioned your name."

Maggie blushed crimson. She had knelt playfully by May's couch, and the faces of the two girls were very near together. She could not hide her blushes.

"I treated your brother shamefully in the summer, May," she said, at last, her eyes drooping beneath May's earnest, searching gaze.

"I thought so," confessed May; "and you refused him?"

"Oh no," said Maggie, emphatically; "I did not speak to him: I did not even know—yes, no, I mean, did not. I don't know what I am saying, oh! forgive me; but he never said he—— loved me;" and she hid her hot face in her hands, and the bright tears shone through her fingers.

"Well," said May, sadly and resolutely, "I am afraid Harry has cared and does care for you, too much for his peace; but what I wanted to say is, that if you help mamma to nurse him, you must expect to hear yourself spoken of by him."

Maggie trembled like a leaf.

"You would rather give it up, would you not?" questioned May very gently.

"Oh! no, no; not if Mrs. Duncan and you will accept my poor services."

So Maggie went up to the sick-room, and, with quick intuition and tact, saw what was wanted and did it. When she had been there a few hours, during which time Harry had been apparently asleep, Maggie begged Mrs. Duncan to get a few hours' rest before she began her wearisome

night watch. She thankfully agreed to this, and Maggie seated herself beside Harry. How shocked she felt at the terrible ravages of his frightful disorder. There was no fear of his distinguishing her, even if he should open his eyes, for the room was partially darkened, to prevent their being affected by too strong a light, for his illness had made them very weak.

"Mother," said Harry, at length, stirring a little.

"Your mother has gone to lie down before sitting up with you for the night."

"Why, Fanny, when did you come?" he said; "I told them not to send for you."

"I came this morning." Maggie hoped it was not wrong to allow him to be deceived.

"I'm very glad there's some one to help mother;" and he dozed again.

Generally he was more feverish towards night, and his thirst was terrible; and then he raved and moaned incessantly, and it was generally about the one topic—Maggie. She heard so much about these trying nights that at last she begged Mrs. Duncan to be allowed to take her place for once, for though since Maggie came the mother went to bed every day for some hours, yet her nights were so broken that she was very tired. When May seconded Maggie, Mrs. Duncan gave in. May said she would sit up in the parlour below. Twice during that night Maggie ran down hastily, and found the faithful sister watching her sick brother from afar. The spirit of May was indeed willing, though the flesh was weak.

Harry talked almost incessantly that night, and Maggie had to listen to words that grieved her to the heart.

"She can't love me," he cried once, and he wept bitterly as he said it. "No, Maggie can't love me. I did not think she would have left the class, and little Owen. Oh!

Maggie, Maggie, do you not know I love you, Maggie? Cruel, cold, yet oh, so fair, so sweet."

Thus sometimes coherently, sometimes in broken sentences, Harry's secret was at last divulged. She did not ask herself did she love him, but she was able to form an idea of the strength of the affection which had so mastered him.

"I am too poor; but oh! it is not her money I covet." Then he said, solemnly, "But God's will be done," and was quiet for a long time.

At last faint streaks of daylight stole through the blinds, and Harry lay exhausted on his pillows. Maggie raised them for him, exchanged one of them for another lying on a chair, which was fresh and cool to the burning brow, and as she did this for his comfort, he said, quite rationally—

"Dear Fanny, thank you; how is May?"

And Maggie told him she was as well as usual, and then he was very quiet and sleepy.

But Maggie was convinced that such nights must wear his strength and exhaust his powers, and she begged his mother to ask the doctor if he could not give him composing draughts, which might enable him to take real quiet rest.

So the weary days passed on, and hope was not dead, for Harry still lingered. But the doctor shook his head when he looked at him, and prepared his friends for the worst. And Mrs. Duncan and Maggie and May all felt as if they were dreaming a terrible dream without the power to waken.

The ravings were over now, for Harry had fallen into a state of unconsciousness, from which it was very difficult to rouse him, as it was imperative he should be roused for medicine and for nourishment.

May was very tired of being so far away from Harry.

"I'll carry you up," said Maggie; "I don't believe you are very heavy; let me try."

But May positively refused.

"Well, then, let Mary come and help, and I am sure we can do it."

Doctor Grey came at that moment, and Maggie stated their difficulty.

"Why did you not tell me before; it *is* much better she should be up close to him, and with him sometimes, and near the rest of you, if she desires it," and he carried her straightway.

CHAPTER XIV.

TO BE OR NOT TO BE?

WAS it possible that Harry was dying? He seemed to have no strength left to rally from that terrible illness, and this question forced itself upon every member of the household. To his mother it brought the chill of anxiety for future care and maintenance, added to the bitter grief of parting from one of the kindest and most affectionate of sons with which a mother had ever been blessed.

To May it threatened the uprooting of a happiness which, deeply as she had prized it—and it had indeed made the chief joy of her existence—she thought she had never fully understood the value of till now. Home life without Harry! The idea was unbearable. Could God be the God of love if He deprived her of her brother?

To Mary, the young servant, the thought came with all the dread of death, natural to the young and lively, who had never till now met it so close at hand. Was he, the pleasant, cheerful master, who had been stricken down so suddenly, never to rise from his bed of sickness to take his place in that household of which he had been the honoured guardian?

To the charwoman it was a source of many half-whispered confidences to the frightened servant, respecting all other deaths and burials with which she had ever had to do.

To his Sunday-school class, the class which threatened so soon to be teacherless, the question came with awful solemnity, and excited deepest grief. Mr. Forrest had no trouble with it, in Harry's compulsory absence. The boys met and read the lesson and talked it over amongst them-

selves with Harry's empty chair in their midst, on which no lad might think of sitting, even for a moment, without receiving a gentle rebuke from a fellow-scholar. Perhaps no greater proof of the sick man's powerful influence for good could have been given than was evinced in this perfect order amongst his boys. How few Sunday-school teachers could venture to leave their classes without a substitute, and feel sure that the superintendent would not be painfully aware of the fact!

These boys only besieged Mr. Forrest and each other with questions when they came, to know how Mr. Duncan was; one boy was always chosen every Sunday to bring word the Sabbath following direct from the house to the school. They were ambitious of this honour, and received it by age, in turn, beginning at the youngest, as the only fair way of settling the difficulty. There is a good deal of latent power to methodise and systematise in boys, if it is only allowed free exercise. Perhaps we scarcely enough leave children and young people to themselves to learn the art of self-government. We do not often enough guide them in this direction. There are certain things which children can learn to manage admirably, for and by themselves, with great advantage to them in after life. For self-reliance and self-confidence are two distinct things. A child taught to be self-reliant is likely to learn very soon how little he knows of what he wants to know, and humility is the foe to odious self-confidence. We experiment morally as well as physically and scientifically for them, and teach them the results of our experiments, instead of giving them the means to experiment themselves. Also, there is surely in the sudden awakening of the nation to the necessity of universal education, a grievous oversight of that instruction in good manners, without which our children will be at best but clever boors. The boys and girls who go to school are,

it is to be feared, every whit as rude in calling names, injuring people's property with which they come in contact, teasing the imbecile or afflicted, and playing mean tricks, as they used to be, before they could read and write. Would it not be an excellent thing to have a standard of manners as well as of ciphering? And should not boys who deface paint on their neighbours' houses, give runaway knocks, tease cats and dogs, and birds and insects; jeer and make fun of the aged, infirm, and crazy, be forbidden to occupy a high position in any school, no matter what their merely intellectual attainments might be? A kind dull boy is worth infinitely more to society than a clever cruel one, though a bright and kind boy is of course worth most of all.

We owe an apology for this lengthy digression, even though it is to occupy that long and wearisome suspense in which the friends of Harry spent so many anxious hours. That dread of his dying, what was it to Maggie? She dared not answer. She dared not face, even in thought, death and the grave for Harry.

At this time paragraphs were regularly inserted in the local newspapers relating to him. He had done so much good, and been so really useful amongst the poor of Somerleigh, that there was a hungering amongst all classes for news of him; and the bulletins respecting him which May wrote twice a day in a clear distinct hand, though with an aching heart, were fastened by Mary each morning and afternoon upon the gate in front of the house, and were copied into the local news' columns of more than one of the Somerleigh papers.

"Mr. Harry Duncan, we regret to learn, still lies in a very critical state."

Would there never be any alteration for the better? Dr. Grey brought a brother physician to see his patient, and the

two nurses anxiously tried to read encouragement in his face. But he expressed merely the very feeblest hope.

"It will be almost a miracle if he recovers, my dear madam. I must beg you do not build upon it in the least," he said, shaking hands sympathisingly with Mrs. Duncan as they parted. "How much I wish that I could honestly say something more encouraging to you."

May was lying on the little couch in Harry's room. She spent almost all of her days there, and some of her nights, but he had not taken any notice of her presence. They thought now that Harry would sleep quietly away. Many times a cold perspiration crept over Maggie as she watched for his breathing and thought it had ceased. And when a slight movement assured her he was still alive, she murmured, "Thank God!" and drew a deep sigh of content.

Mrs. Duncan and Maggie watched him alternately through the nights, each promising to call the other when the last sad change came over the beloved face. Harry looked wan, now that the fever had gone, and the scars and pits the small-pox had left had spoiled his good looks. But when Maggie gazed at him, as she often did through a mist of tears, she was proud of those tokens of his suffering. They were, she thought, marks of a heroism more glorious than that of the grandest warrior to whom the world has ever given praise; scorchings of the fire of martyrdom, from which he had not shrunk, but simply and bravely endured from love to Christ, and love to Christ's suffering ones.

It was one night when she had been watching him and thinking of him thus for many minutes, thatHarry opened his eyes without otherwise moving, and met her eyes, so tenderly, so intently fixed upon him. He gazed on her for a while and then asked,—

"Where am I? Is this heaven? I am so happy—and Maggie is with me."

His voice was so feeble that Maggie could hardly distinguish the faintly spoken words. Intensely anxious not to startle him, to answer quietly, without the abrupt change of position or voice which might unduly arouse him, she said in soft, quiet tones,—

"Try to sleep, Harry. This is not heaven; but Maggie *is* here, and I am not going away till you are better." "Oh!" thought poor Maggie even as she spoke, "would he be better in heaven or on earth?"

"Not going away again, Maggie? I don't understand."

"Don't try to understand yet. You are far too weak to talk. Try to go to sleep. We will have a long talk some day."

And again, spite of the glad hope that was somehow dawning in her heart, she asked herself, "Some day? oh! when and where will that some day be?"

Harry Duncan was soothed by Maggie's voice, and he obeyed her readily; turning round to where she smoothed his pillow with her soft light touch, he went to sleep. And that sleep of his was so quiet and peaceful that hope strengthened every minute, and Maggie ventured to think with trembling joy of a possible future, and to recall with gratitude to God how He had led her, even though it had been by the hand of judgment, from the troublous gaiety of her past into the child-like trust of the present hour. For the news of the small-pox pestilence in Somerleigh had rendered the false life she was leading utterly without power to deaden her conscience, as it had formerly done.

She had passed through some terrible nights of anguish at Sandycoombe, listening to the sea, which in its boundlessness and solemnity was the symbol of the eternity from which she knew her soul could not escape. How was that eternity to be spent? The news from Somerleigh thickened with interest: Owen was ill. The child, whose simple call

to duty she, like a faithless and cowardly Jonah, had run away from, was "sick unto death;" and she had neglected him, and left another to risk his life for the boy, who had been given to her to train for God—and that other Harry Duncan. Her sins piled themselves up like huge black thunder-clouds in a stormy sky. Neglect of her own soul, neglect of the souls of others, especially of poor little Owen; and above all other sins, neglect of God. Sometimes she tossed in agony on her soft pillows, often she rose and spent hours looking out into the night, with the stars for witnesses, and the heavy sounding sea, booming perpetually, and washing up and back from the sandy beach. Sometimes she paced backwards and forwards with bare feet, noiselessly, the length of her softly carpeted, luxurious little chamber; more restless in soul than in body even then.

There came the news of little Owen's death, quickly followed by that of Harry Duncan's illness, and she believed that the sin of taking away life was on her soul, and her agony and distress increased. But that last touch of God's chastening hand had humbled her, she sank on her knees, her pride gone, weeping bitterly, and beseeching that she might give her life for the life of Harry Duncan. And God, our Father, always so much more willing to be gracious than we are to trust His boundless, unfathomable love, opened His arms wide, and folded the poor prodigal safe in His fatherly embrace, and clothed her with the robes of a king's daughter, "all glorious," instead of the filthy rags which she had striven to deck and to adorn.

Maggie's awakening to a sense of her need of nourishment for her soul is not the only instance of a teacher going to a Sunday-school to teach, and being taught therein instead, that lesson, without which we are indeed most helpless and most foolish, though we have the riches of a Crœsus and the wisdom of a Plato. And now the once

"weary and heavy laden" Maggie turned unreservedly to Him whose "yoke is easy and whose burden is light."

It was fully two hours past the usual time for calling Mrs. Duncan, but Maggie was in no hurry to disturb her, for Harry's sleep was very peaceful, and like a sensible nurse she judged that the quieter the house was kept the better. Though Maggie had reviewed, as we have seen, whilst watching beside Harry, the path by which her God had led her from darkness into light, she was by no means one whit the less careful of her patient on account of these thoughts. And when at last he stirred again, she was by his side in an instant, to embrace the opportunity of keeping up his strength with milk or jelly or beef tea.

"Maggie, you here still," he said feebly, as before, when he had drunk slowly, but with apparent relish, the milk she brought to him.

"Yes, Harry," she said very softly and sweetly. It was the first time she had ever called him so in his presence, and she blushed as she spoke his name; "but pray," she added, in the same even, gentle tone, "go to sleep again, for you are very, very weak, and must not talk." She shook up his pillows. "Are you comfortable?" she asked, for his eyes were watching her, as if satisfying themselves.

"Yes," he replied, "very. But," he added, with a good deal of hesitation, "may I have your hand?"

His own, white, and oh! so sadly thin, lay on the coverlid. Hardly able to restrain herself from crying at that humbly-spoken request, Maggie put hers within it, and with a smile on his lips he went to sleep again.

Half an hour later Mrs. Duncan entered. Maggie laid her other hand upon her lips, and then motioned to Harry's mother to draw near, and bend down to her.

"He is better," she whispered, "he has spoken rationally and taken food well—and he asked me for it," she added

apologetically, as Mrs. Duncan looked at her hand, which lay in his.

Slowly but surely after that night of restful sleep, Harry struggled back to life. Timidly the great joy was accepted by those near and dear to him, who feared, poor throbbing, doubtful hearts, lest they should be compelled to relinquish it again. May was moved to her couch, and listened to Harry's regular quiet breathing as to some sweet music.

The doctor came, and smiled pleasantly as he looked at his patient, and then glanced meaningly and mischievously, as doctors are wont to glance, at Maggie's hand, which was still held in Harry's. But doctors are likewise excellent keepers of secrets, for in truth they have plenty of practice, and though she coloured and looked very conscious, and, as Dr. Grey thought, exceedingly pretty, under the twinkle of his eye, he would be the last to publish any news till he had received it officially, instead of learning it accidentally, and Maggie knew this and was content. But when Harry roused and began to speak to his doctor, Maggie felt she could not bear it any longer, and slipped away at once. And the invalid said to Dr. Grey, "I don't at all understand how Miss Griffiths came here, and I am sure she ought not to be here; there must be danger for her."

"And I am sure she ought to be here," said the doctor, "and that she was never more in her right place than now. But I can't allow any more talking at present, my dear Harry, so take this and be still, and sleep as much as you like for the next twenty-four hours, the more the better, and I will call and see you again by-and-bye."

He stooped over May's couch as he went out. "Cheer up, my child; we shall have him about again soon."

Dr. Grey was right. Directly the news of his improvement got abroad, delightful packages, hampers, and baskets came from far and near, containing game and poultry and

flowers and fruit, and tempting viands to coax the appetite of the invalid, which indeed very soon needed no coaxing, but had rather to be restrained, so ravenous did he become for food to satisfy his hunger. Not the least welcome to Harry, we may be sure, were the gifts of the poor. His boys joined together and purchased a small box of delicious oranges, and Harry thought there never had grown fruit with quite so fine a flavour, and sent a message to the delighted lads to this effect. Old women made wonderful little cakes for him, and if he could not always eat these, he could at least accept and feed his heart upon the love which made them.

"Please bring me a glass, mother," Harry said one day, just after the hope of his getting well was thoroughly established.

"I think you had better not, my son," said poor Mrs. Duncan, troubled to refuse, more troubled still to comply, for she knew how his appearance would startle him, utterly unprepared, as he must be, for the woeful change.

"Maggie—Miss Griffiths—will you?"

"You are very much altered, Harry," said Maggie gently; "outwardly I mean, and your mother fears the shock may be too much for you yet. Will you not wait a few days more till you are stronger?"

"Let me know the worst," he said, and there was a tinge of bitterness in his tone.

"If you wish it, Harry," and Maggie let him see.

He groaned as he looked, turned away, hid his poor disfigured face in the bed-clothes, and wept aloud.

Maggie put away the glass and returned to the bedside. She was crying herself, for it is terrible to a woman to see the man she loves weep, and weep bitterly. And when Harry's sobs did not cease for many minutes, Maggie laid her hand upon his head.

"Pray go away, Miss Griffiths, the dream has ended." He kept his face hidden yet. Had he seen Maggie's countenance, so tender and so true, he might have doubted himself, his own words, but assuredly not her love.

Mrs. Duncan, knowing that he and Maggie had best be alone now for a little, left them.

"Maggie," he said, from his pillow, as he heard his mother's receding step, "I have been giving way to a delicious dream of joy, but that peep at myself has ended it." Harry still spoke without looking at her as he proceeded, "I will never ask a woman to have such a man for her husband, least of all *you*."

"Harry, I am disappointed in you, for the only time in my life," said Maggie, bravely; and her honest words were as a tonic to brace Harry against his own vanity. "Is the *man* any worse, any less worthy a woman's love, because his face is scarred in God's service?"

Harry was silent, and Maggie, with her quick woman's wit, knew she had hit her mark, so she changed her tone.

"Why, I had no idea, Harry, when you were so spruce and nice on those Sundays long ago, when you used to walk across the downs with me to Rose Villa after school, that you meant any woman to marry your face and not yourself. Oh! vanity, vanity," she added philosophically, apostrophising that weakness, "thou hast thy abode deep down in the heart of thoughtful man, as well as in woman's more ephemeral nature!"

Her tones of mocking irony were so coupled with fun that Harry was obliged to turn his face and smile at her, and the smile made him look so much like his old self that Maggie told him so, and prophesied that unless he put on a miserable air, which would indeed make him look very wretched, people would soon forget everything but that Harry Duncan had not lost his old pleasant smile.

"Yet I could never ask her," persisted Harry.

"That is very mean of you," she replied, laughing; "why, you don't mean to say that the poor creature, whoever she may be, must ask *you* to marry *her?* I know," she added, "at least one woman who *never* would ask you." Maggie's mirth was infectious.

"Oh! Maggie, Maggie," said poor Harry, "I have no courage whatever now. I am poor; you are rich: I am ugly; you are handsome."

"'Handsome is that handsome does, sir,'" she said, with her sauciest smile; "judged by that, I know who is the better-looking of us two."

"And I know too," rejoined Harry; "you have run every risk; more risk in coming here than I did in going to the hospital. You have acted nobly, and may God reward you."

"I don't see the nobility, for I was just vaccinated again, with the most encouraging result," said Maggie, drily; and she made Harry smile in spite of himself.

Mrs. Duncan re-entered, and the conversation was accordingly suspended.

In another three weeks, Mrs. Duncan and her son and daughter went to lodgings in Sandycoombe to which Maggie had recommended them; while she remained behind, to have the house thoroughly renovated and disinfected; and then, after staying away awhile longer yet, for safety's sake, she returned to Rose Villa, to her sister Annie.

But before this Harry and she had had that "long talk" she had once promised him; which, as neither of them write this, and no one else was hovering around to hear a beginning or an ending of a sentence, it is impossible to transcribe; only this much may be said: we know that Harry's cowardice somehow fled, he grew bold as a lion, and his remaining dissatisfaction was all summed up in one

sentence—for in every other particular he was supremely happy—

"I wish you had not had so much money, Maggie. I never meant any one to be able possibly to say that I was to 'profit' by my wife."

"Not 'profit' by your wife; then why ever should you marry at all?" asked Maggie, with her old bright playfulness. "I assure you, sir," she went on, with most provoking gravity, "I had made up my mind never to marry at all, unless I *could* profit by my husband, and richly too."

Harry laughed and owned she was right.

"Which you will generally find me, Mr. Duncan," she gaily retorted.

So life and love came hand in hand to Maggie Griffiths, instead of death and sorrow.

CHAPTER XV.

A GOLDEN SUNSET.

THE dire disease, which had wrought so much havoc in Somerleigh, did not let the fair northern city of Edinburgh go unscathed. It had its victims amongst high and low, the neighbourhood of the Grassmarket was not unvisited.

One day poor old Biddy Macarthy, standing by her barrow in the High Street, complained to an old crony who passed with her basket of picked shell-fish on her arm.

"Shure and it's mesilf that does not feel well at all, at all," she said; "my legs they thremble under me, and I have no strength left in me, the morn."

"Jist be afther takin' a dhrap o' the craythur," advised Milly O'Brien, "and ye'll feel yersilf revived."

But Biddy shook her head resolutely.

"Shure and I'm afeared o' the whisky," she said; "it jist flies to me head, and does me all manner o' mischief. But if ye will mind the barrow, Milly, this day, and sell a thrifle or two if you can for me, I'll make it up to ye; and I'll go home and have a cup o' tay, and be off wid me to bed."

Milly O'Brien agreed, and Biddy went wearily back to the Grassmarket and Fraser's Close. On her way thither the little Flower of the Grassmarket overtook her. She was dancing along gaily, coming home from school, but now she stopped and put her little hand in that of the old woman, and affectionately inquired,—

"Why, what ails ye, Biddy? Ye walk like as ye were in pain."

"Loike as if I were in pain? Och! honey, the pain is there shure enough. I'm very bad, Jessie; I don't know what ails me, but I have to lie down and thry to sleep it off."

"An' I'll come and sing to ye, Biddy, some of the wee bit verses ye like sae weel."

"I'd loike to hear ye, darlint," responded Biddy.

So after running into her own room, to find her mother absent as usual, Jessie brought in her bread and butter and milk, and spread it along with the old woman's tea-things on her little table, and insisted on Biddy's sharing her butter with her, for the old woman could seldom afford that luxury.

But it was little old Biddy had an appetite to eat, and before she could get to bed she grew very faint, and her head ached terribly. Then little Jessie sat on the foot of the bed and sang to her. She went through several of her little pieces in her pretty sweet low voice, and then, finding that her friend was asleep, she stopped singing and began to think. She thought of her little friends in the hospital, and of the children who were probably expecting her down in the Grassmarket below, round their favourite play-place, the Corn Exchange. But she would not leave old Biddy now that she was sick and in trouble for any play.

Biddy's breathing grew heavy and oppressed, and in the gloaming—it was not nearly dark yet—she could see that her face looked hot and feverish. By slow degrees the light faded and night crept on, little Jessie's head began to nod, and at last she fell on the bed at Biddy's feet, and was fast asleep. Something awoke Jessie when it was dark, and she found that old Biddy was feeling about over the bed-clothes, and moaning and crying out piteously that she was very ill, and had no one to care for her.

"I'm here. I care for ye, Biddy," said the child, feeling

quite ashamed not to have watched more patiently. "I'll nurse ye, and do for ye; wait a wee till I find a licht," and the little Flower of the Grassmarket, who knew well all Biddy's housekeeping, and where she kept her "wee bit" things, stepped on to a chair, and reached the candle and matches from the cupboard and procured a light.

"Och hone, I am cauld and shivered," said Biddy; "will ye rin down, Jessie, to Mrs. Menzies, and ask her will she step up and jist see me, for I think I am dyin'."

Jessie did not hesitate. She went down the long winding stairs of the high house till she arrived at the bottom.

"Auld Biddy Macarthy wants ye," said Jessie, when she had roused Mrs. Menzies; "she's unco' bad, and she says she will soon be dyin'."

Mrs. Menzies at once put on her petticoat and shawl—she was not accustomed to wear shoes and stockings—and slipped upstairs with Jessie.

"If it wasna nicht I wad send ye for the doctor," said Mrs. Menzies to Jessie, as soon as she looked at the old Irishwoman, with a compassionate gaze; "but I'll do a' I can for her, and wait till morn."

Neither of them left old Biddy that night, though the child, as was but natural, dropped off to sleep again as before on her old friend's bed. When the morning broke, the kind-hearted, self-constituted nurse, woke the child gently, and sent her to the doctor. He soon came, looked attentively at Biddy, heard her symptoms, and soon pronounced her malady to be suppressed small-pox; she had taken a violent chill which prevented the eruption from showing itself.

"The child had better not be here," he said, pointing to Jessie; but Jessie had too much reason to trust the kindness of doctors for her to be afraid of them, and she pleaded so earnestly that she might be allowed to stay that he asked

where her mother was, and where she lived, and when he found she was out now, and that she often left the little girl for days in Biddy's care, he shook his head, and said he supposed the risk had already been run, and that it was not of much use to separate them now.

"But she must not go to school and be here as well," he said; and Mrs. Menzies sent a message of explanation to the schoolmistress, so the little flower was free to bloom beside her old friend. Biddy was very restless the first day, and could not bear much talking to, but on the second she appeared more comfortable, and her older, as well as her younger, nurse thought she was really getting better.

Father Moore, missing Biddy from beside her barrow in the street, and learning from that other member of his flock, Milly O'Brien, how ill she was, came to see her. Milly had intended to visit her friend after business hours the night before, but she had been tempted to spend all the money she had taken for Biddy at a whisky-shop in company with another woman, and had then felt too much ashamed to show herself. Jessie was reading out of her Bible to the old Irishwoman when Father Moore arrived.

"Oh! yer riverence," said Biddy Macarthy, kindling with pleasure at the honour of a visit from her priest, "it's mesilf that thanks ye for comin'; but ye must know that I'm very happy, thanks to the blessed Lord Jesus Christ."

"And to the blessed Virgin," responded Father Moore, "who helps all her faithful children in the hour of sorest need."

Biddy did not dispute it, and received the good man's ministrations with sincere pleasure. It was natural that when the old Irishwoman's soul became alive to sin, as it had become through the innocent and unconscious teachings of the little Flower of the Grassmarket, that she should cling all the more devoutly to that form of religion in which she

had been taught to believe. The room being cleared, Father Moore received her confession, and pronounced absolution, and when he left promised to see her again on the morrow. He was followed by the grateful old creature's blessings, nor did he forget to put a half-crown into the hand of Mrs. Menzies to minister to his co-religionist's necessities. He was a generous-hearted man, with an atmosphere of kindliness about him, and his presence was ever welcome to his flock.

But old Biddy trusted with all her heart to the great High Priest of our profession, who "was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin;" and in thus trusting, with or without an earthly priest, she was safe.

"All the fear and the dread that were upon me yesternight, when I tould ye to be quick and call Mrs. Menzies, He has taken away, Jessie darlint;" she said later that day, as the little Flower of the Grassmarket sat beside her with her hymn-book in her hand; "There's a text I mind ye read to me once, Jessie," she added, "about the light at evening."

"'At eventide there will be licht,'" quoted Jessie.

"And I think, Jessie, that's just like mesilf, I'll be having a *goulden sunset*, darlint. The day's been cloudy, and what wid me sins and me throubles, and me thoughtlessness, it has been a day o' clouds and thick darkness, but mind ye, Jessie, 'at eventide there shall be light.' I mind me of ould times to-night, darlint, in the blessed ould counthry, and I love Oireland yet, honey, the next counthry to heaven, and when I was a mere tiny girlie, here, there and everywhere after my mother's gound, and we lived by the *say*, Jessie, the great wide and spreading ocean, on which ould Oireland floats, like a green gem of beauty, the Emerald Isle, I never *belaved* I would lave it so long, to die in a foreign land. What was it I was telling ye about, Jessie?"

"The sea," said Jessie, "the sea that we have a peep at frae the Castle Hill, and frae yon Craigs," and Jessie's little finger pointed in the direction of the Queen's Park.

"Yes, we were close to the say," resumed Biddy; "and mother and me we gathered the weed, and the moss, and the kale, to sell, and gain a few pence by the selling. And, och hone, haven't I seen the light at eventide, spread like a goulden cloud over the say, and the heavens lit up with crimson, and orange, and gould, till they dazzled the eyes that looked on them. And the stormy days, Jessie, had often grand sunsets; the clouds cleared, and the sun finished up bright; and the glory was like Revelation, when it tells of heaven. I'd like a goulden sunset to my ould life, Jessie, and God can give it to me."

Who of us that has watched beside the sick and dying poor can fail to be often struck with the wondrous language some of them use, the clear, plain, undoubting reception of the glorious truths of the Gospel which is given to them? This was the case with Biddy Macarthy, forgiven much, she had loved much, and there were warmth and beauty in her comparisons and descriptions.

And God gave her the golden sunset she so desired, as she believed He would. She was talking still with little Jessie when the evening drew on. The natural sunset was beautiful that night; the brightly-tinted clouds were marked upon the opal of the sky with radiant glory, and broadly fringed with fretted gold; as Biddy and Jessie were at the top of the old house in the Grassmarket, the beams of the setting sun filled the little barely-furnished room, and lit up the aged face, with its brown and wrinkled surface, and shone into the keen black eyes. They danced, too, like sportive fairies over the little Flower of the Grassmarket, for they were caught and reflected in the gilding of her

Bible. They made golden Jessie's flaxen hair, and looked at themselves in her lovely blue eyes.

"'Tis a goulden sunset widout, Jessie," said old Biddy, "and a goulden sunset within. The Sun of Righteousness will next rise for me in heaven. Kiss me, darlint, and mind always remember I had the goulden sunset that I asked for." She leaned back on her pillow and went to sleep, as Jessie thought, but when, a while later, Mrs. Menzies came up to see how she was getting on, the dear old Irishwoman was gone into the land where the need not they light of the sun, "for the Lord God and the Lamb are the light thereof."

"They looked, she was dead,
Her spirit had fled,
Painless and swift as her own desire;
And her soul undrest
From its mortal vest
Had stepped in its car of heavenly fire,
And proved how bright
Were the realms of light,
Bursting at once upon the sight."

This was little Jessie's lesson from the solemn teacher, Death, and the lesson was neither grim nor fearful to her, but full of peace. The Catholics in Edinburgh gave Biddy a neat and decent funeral, and previously there was, of course, a wake over the corpse in Fraser's Close, but Mrs. Menzies, who was a sober, honest woman, took care to have it as respectably and abstemiously conducted as possible, and little Jessie was present all the time.

The little Flower of the Grassmarket walked between Milly O'Brien and Mrs. Menzies to the cemetery, close after the coffin as chief mourner, dressed in all the black they could muster for her. For, as all agreed, little Jessie had been as good as a granddaughter to her old friend; and every whit as much loved by Biddy Macarthy, as if she had really

stood in that relationship to her. Jessie did not know at first how much she should miss Biddy. The child, left so much alone by her erring mother, had gone to the old Irishwoman's room almost more than to her own, had carried there all her little joys and sorrows, and had ever been sure of the heartiest welcome and sympathy. She had taken her meals there, and read there, and learned her spelling there. And now many were the tears the poor little flower wept in secret over her lost companion.

CHAPTER XVI.

A WEDDING.

HEROES and heroines who are in love with each other in novels are generally sufficiently amiable to satisfy the requirements of the reading public, by going through a number of misadventures and misunderstandings as to the state of their affections, so as to arrive at the satisfactory conclusion of the mysteries at precisely one and the same time that the readers arrive at the end of the third volume. Or, at all events, there are merely a few pages left in it for church decorations, wedding bells, cakes, favours, and breakfasts. After which, in a paragraph descriptive of the tour on which the young couple set out, we, the reading public, at once dismiss the newly-wedded pair from our thoughts, to concern ourselves afresh with the fortunes of another hero and another heroine, hereafter to be disposed of in precisely the same style, only, like old tunes rearranged, "with variations."

But as Maggie and Harry were not merely the hero and heroine of a tale, they altogether objected to waiting for the end of the story, and preferred to be married when it suited themselves, and that was the very anniversary of that summer morning when they had met so inauspiciously at Sandycoombe. Maggie, our bride-elect, had a superstitious belief that she could, so to speak, wipe out with her orthodox, sweet "I will," the unpleasant remembrance of the day when she had looked so determinately "I won't" at Harry Duncan.

It was a beautiful morning when Maggie arrayed herself, and was arrayed by Annie, for her wedding. The inter-

vening months between Harry's recovery and the marriage had been spent by Maggie mostly with her sister, but partly at Sandycoombe. Mr. and Mrs. Stringer were by no means elated at the match, and perhaps this was not to be wondered at. They felt she could do better, and Mrs. Stringer especially had made an arrangement in her mind which she liked much better than Maggie's persistent choice for that very plain and comparatively poor young man, Harry Duncan, her brother-in-law's clerk. Thanks, however, to Edward Burnard's generosity, Harry was presently elevated to the dignity of his partner, and he never had the slightest reason to regret his choice, though Harry did not understand iron-founding, and could not introduce any fresh capital into the concern.

There were other hands, besides the many hands at Rose Villa, which were engaged in wedding preparations. There were laughing and mirth very early that morning in West Lane Ragged-school, where a number of the elder boys and girls were busy amongst more flowers than they had ever seen before. The young people were advised and superintended and helped by the whole of the Forrest family, who guided them in the choice of appropriate decorations, but left them almost entirely to themselves to accomplish these. It was a first-rate lesson to them in real refinement, although unconsciously learned. The day before, both morning and evening, parties of the boys had taken long walks in various directions, in search of such flowers as the hedges could furnish, and there were splendid sprays brought home of fragrant honeysuckle and clusters of wild roses, buds just coming into bloom and grand long stalks of fox-glove with their handsome purple crimson bells, and handfuls of feathery ferns, and straight-up basket-shaped ferns growing out in several leaves from one root, and hart's tongue ferns, and corn pinks, and purple scabious, and wild clematis with

its tiny flowers, and white convolvulus, which shut up its pretty delicate cups disappointingly almost directly it was gathered. And besides all these, the children's own flowers, Mr. Burnard had sent a quantity of evergreens and red and white roses, and Harry had ordered his old friend to send over to the school five-shillings'-worth of the gayest flowers he could gather for the money, and the children's eyes feasted now on the unwonted loveliness before them.

In another room, the school porter and his wife, and some others, were busy in quite a different way, cutting up cake, and arranging, from the great baskets of earthenware that stood about the room, the various tea services on trays, twelve cups and saucers to each. And if you could have gone to a certain bakehouse in Somerleigh the evening before, you might have discovered a very appetising smell from some hundreds of excellent cakes that were being baked for the tea party in West Lane, while, even now, Frank Drew may be seen bearing a burden of sugar and coffee from his master's shop to that same rendezvous.

Frank himself and all his fellow scholars, as well as Edward Burnard's Bible-class, are invited by the bride and bridegroom to this bridal tea party, and when he has a peep at the schoolroom, which is being transformed into a sort of impromptu fairyland by the aid of the flowers and an abundance of pink and white long cloth, he wishes very much that he could stay and help. Serious thoughts, too, cross his mind as to the costume suitable for appearing in such a room and with such a company as this; he has some idea that a white waistcoat and white trousers would be decidedly most befitting the occasion.

The tea is to be at four o'clock, an exceptionally early hour, that the guests may have an exceptional visit from the newly-married pair, who have signified their desire and intention to look in and see them before starting from

Somerleigh on their wedding tour. And, in anticipation of this event, a small round mahogany table has been lent for the occasion by Mr. Forrest, and is placed in a wooden temporary bower, which bower being lined with white and covered with flowers and evergreens, looks very pretty and appropriate for such visitors. On the table are two elegant vases, and two real china very pretty cups and saucers, also from Mr. Forrest's house close by. The vases are filled with delicate flowers. Blush roses, forget-me-nots, white jessamine, honeysuckle, and white roses, are mingled with wonderful taste; and it is fully expected and hoped that the bride and bridegroom will pause and condescend to take a cup of coffee in that bower.

Gradually, as the hours pass on, the young decorators have to leave for their different labours in mill, and factory, and shop, but they have advanced in this voluntary labour of love so well from five o'clock to half-past eight that the dinner hour is likely to see it well finished, with the help of the Forrests and the girls, in preparing festoons and wreaths of flowers during the absence of the men and boys.

The wedding itself is to take place at eleven, and Rose Villa is full of invited guests. Mr. and Mrs. Stringer are there, of course, from Sandycoombe; and Maggie's uncle is appointed to "give her away" in the approaching ceremony. Their opposition has melted gradually since they learnt to know more of Harry's sterling worth, and of their darling Maggie's happiness in him. Also his position, as partner in the honourable firm of Burnard and Duncan, is much more satisfactory to them than when he was merely a clerk.

Maggie Griffiths, as we have said, is attiring herself in her wedding garments, and her sister is helping her. There is not much to describe about the wedding dress, for the materials are of the purest, whitest, lightest kinds that can

be imagined, suited to the lovely blue sky and warm sunshine of that summer morning. And when her robes are adjusted Maggie seems to float along in a small white cloud of aerophane and soft muslins and laces. The only colour about her is the delicate blush on her cheeks, and the delicate tints of the orange blossom and myrtle which form her wreath, and the gold locket crusted with diamonds on her breast, which enshrines Harry's likeness.

Those marks of Harry's terrible illness, which cost him some moments of unutterable agony, when they seemed to separate him from his love, are very much worn off, or else all his friends are so used to them now that they don't much notice them; and he looks to-day the good, true, honest man he is, with his happiness at spring-tide, and his heart bounding with gratitude to God, with joy at the accomplishment of his highest earthly hopes.

Maggie is very lovely in her bridal dress; her rich, brown hair mingles with the fair flowers, and then is braided and caught up again with her pearl comb—as Harry likes to see it. Her eyes have a shy sweetness in them all that day, as they seek her bridegroom, or meet the admiring glances of her friends. Her playfulness has not deserted her, but is subdued by the intensity of her gladness, and she is especially quiet, though by no means unsympathising, amidst the festivities.

May Duncan was, of course, there. Dear May, with the sweet unselfishness of her noble nature, she had learnt to think so much more of Harry's gain than of her own loss, that she was heartily pleased with the marriage, and had long ago become an authority on wedding garments. In truth, Maggie's devoted nursing of Harry, the brave help she rendered them at that sad juncture, the comfort she was to them with her naturally self-reliant and able mind, had endeared her to all his family more than they could have told.

Fanny Duncan and a young lady from Sandycoombe were Maggie's adult bridesmaids, besides which there was a pretty little pair of miniature bridesmaids, the eldest girls in the families of Harry's married sisters being elevated to this dignity, to their complete satisfaction. And very pretty and charming the little fairies looked in their white frocks and hats, and pink sashes and hair ribbons; while a couple of little boys, also one from each family, in the smartest juvenile attire compatible with elegance, waited on their respective cousins, with much outward propriety and inward mirth, which manifested itself in delightful little outbursts of uncontrollable fun.

Off drove the merry bridal party to a pretty little, old, ivy-clad church on the outskirts of the downs, almost in the country. It had once formed the chapel of a monastery, and the sunshine streamed through very ancient and mellow-tinted windows, in rich rays of ruby, violet, and gold, and glorified the white robes of the sweet bride and her pretty maidens as they knelt before the altar. And when the ceremony was over, the bells rang out in the clear, sunshiny air, and the trees on each cliff side, so green and beautiful, seemed to catch the mirthful music, and throw it from cliff to cliff till it tumbled headlong, and was lost in the murmur of the river far below. And Harry and Maggie, clasping each other's hands and reading each other's eyes, felt the new joy that before all the world they two were now made one.

So, back again to Rose Villa, the gay horses dancing along the smooth road, to gather around the fine collation that was spread there, for which everybody had a very good appetite, and not least the four small people, of whom Annie Burnard took such excellent care.

"Must we go in our wedding raiment?" said Fanny Duncan, when the visit to the tea-party in West Lane was

talked of; "I fear the atmosphere of that region will not be likely to improve our appearance."

"By all means," said Maggie, "we are expected to appear so, and I would not disappoint them for anything. Oh! May," Maggie added, looking suddenly at the sweet invalid, "I do wish you could go too."

"I could carry Auntie May, if she would let me," said Master Walter Stanhope, aged eight and a half years.

"And so could I," echoed Master Willie French, aged seven years and two days, who was quite determined not to be outdone by his bigger cousin.

May was lying on her couch, beside which there was a small table laden with the dainties of the feast, brought by her little nephews, to whose especial care Edward Burnard had entrusted her. May, in her white dress and wreath of forget-me-nots and white jessamine, for she was dressed precisely like the other grown-up bridesmaids, and was, as Maggie put it, her "dear home bridesmaid," looked very lovely. She joined in the merriment excited by her little nephew's suggestions, and her pale face flushed when Maggie spoke, but she decided swiftly that there was no help for it, and that she should be with them in thought.

"Besides," she whispered, when Maggie presently herself came to her with a slice of her bridecake, "I shall be here when you return, and shall get a last little peep at you two dear ones, which nobody else will, for they must all stay longer at the tea-party."

So cabs came and took the ladies to West Lane, and some of the gentlemen went with them, and others walked. It had been decided that there should be some music and singing and a few readings in the schoolroom, after coffee had been served, and Mr. Burnard was to show some of his slides, and at nine o'clock there was to be an abundant supply of tarts, cake, and fruits, spread upon the tables.

Many of the wedding guests had volunteered to assist in the amusements, and Mr. Stringer, who had an excellent and powerful voice, was to favour them with "The Death of Nelson." But none of these visitors were prepared for the pretty sight which burst upon their view. The schoolroom door had been lifted off its hinges, and the opening was transformed into a triumphal arch, with the word "welcome" formed by white roses amongst the dark evergreens. Within, the dull room was marvellously transformed. There was, of course, the bower, the centre of attraction, and across from wall to wall were hung festoons of ivy and flowers, while wreaths and bunches and boughs and branches and garlands hid every unsightly thing, and made beautiful every plain one. Maggie's natural and delighted burst of pleasure, which was rather of the nature of an Irish bull, evoked much delight and merriment.

"Why, Harry," she said, aloud, to her husband, "I shouldn't have known I was here!" while Harry playfully retorted,—

"But here you are, Maggie," and led his bride up the whole length of the room before the hundreds of admiring eyes, who appreciated to the full her kindness in coming to them in what every girl decided at once was "The beautifullest dress she ever seed."

To the eldest in Harry's class it had been determined to grant the honour of presenting the bridegroom with an address, which the best scholar in the class had been called upon to compose and indite, and to the youngest had been given the equal honour of presenting the bride with a nosegay. They had gone into committee on their arrangements, and never did civic dignitaries, anxious for the honour of their town amongst the other towns of the nation on the occasion of a royal visit, take more pains to express the appreciation they felt of that honour than did Harry's class at this juncture.

The address, it was decided, should be read aloud. Harry had not been so overwhelmed with addresses in his life that he was anxious to have it "taken as if read." And the young man read the following with many blushes and considerable hesitation, yet withal creditably :—

"Dear and Honoured Sir,—You know that we all love you, and can't be more glad than when we see you happy. We have known what it is to be very miserable and dreadfully anxious about you, because of your being ill ; and now we know, on the contrary, what it is to be very happy and very pleased about you, because of your gaining so much joy as to have Miss Griffiths, whom you love so well, changed into your wife."

This sentence was as much as Tom Wales, the tall, fine young fellow who was reading it, could manage. Each clause seemed to have a tendency, like a verbal fish-bone, to stick in his throat, and was hemmed over and coughed over considerably. All which made Maggie very warm, to say nothing of the eyes that were so persistently and admiringly fixed on her, the heat of the room, and the heat of the summer day. So her colour rose considerably, and she was puzzled exceedingly where to look to hide her becoming smiles and blushes.

The reader of the address having at length steered his course in safety to the end of this troublesome paragraph, went on again much more fluently.

"And we pray God that He may ever bless both you and Mrs. Duncan. Your loving and grateful Class,

"TOM WALES,
"JOHN SMITH,
"FRANK SMITH," etc., etc.,

to the end of the twenty-five names, each boy having signed the document in his own handwriting with much labour and perseverance. As this, after being read, was

handed to Harry, Charlie Lucraft, the youngest boy, advanced also to Maggie, holding a lovely nosegay for her in his hand, for which Maggie thanked him with the warmest expressions of delight. Harry then made a short speech in answer to the address, which is as worthy of being recorded as many another speech made on like occasions, and was as follows :—

"My dear fellows,—It seems to me that this is the very pleasantest day I ever had. (Laughter.) I think it ought to be—("hear, hear!") —for everybody seems to have made up his or her mind to be kind to me to-day. Mrs. Duncan, my dear wife, has been kinder to me than I can ever tell you, I am sure. ("Oh, Harry!") You will excuse her interruption—(laughter)—and I have had a capital wedding breakfast, and an excellent wedding cake—(laughter)—some of which, I may tell you, just a crumb for everybody, is coming here at supper time. (Laughter and cheers.) And now, as if all this were not enough, I have to assure you that you have given me another cup full of joy. My dear lads, I can't find words to thank you for these pleasant expressions of your love for me in the address, and of your admiration for my dear wife in the nosegay. But I think she will keep those flowers, even after they are faded." (Maggie smiled at him in acquiescence, and the boys gathered round them valued that smile and understood it.) "And I am sure that I shall keep this address as long as I live. There is one other thing I want to say to you; all through this day, elevating my joy, increasing my happiness, I have felt the sweet sense that it is my Father whom I love who gives me all my blessings; my Father and your Father, my God and your God. I have told you, and I hope I have shown you, that there is nothing dismal about religion. When we are in trouble, *as I know*, it comforts us as nothing else can, and when we are in joy it makes the sunshine brighter, the roses sweeter, and the pleasure more true. Trust in the Lord; there is music in every word. Trust Him always, in days of gloom and days of mirth, and your trust shall not be confounded. I thank you again, and yet again, for your kindness shown this day to me and my dear wife." (Cheers.)

And then, being led to the bower, Mr. and Mrs. Duncan were requested to be seated, and the youngest of Mr. Forrest's children waited upon the bride and bridegroom with

coffee and cake; and the coffee was placed upon the tables, and grace was sung, and the meal began, and the mirth waxed fast and furious. The wedding-party spread themselves about the room to enjoy the scene, partaking of coffee here and there. Presently a carriage was announced for Mr. and Mrs. Duncan, and with kindly good-byes they left the pretty bower and their cheerful young guests, who all stood respectfully as they quitted the apartment, and then went back to their meal with fresh appetite.

Tom Wales slipped out to hold open the door of the fly, Frank Drew handed out the nosegay to Maggie, and they were off. Quickly reaching Rose Villa, Maggie changed her pretty robes for graver attire, and with a tender good-bye to May and Mrs. Duncan, the only ones of the company left there, they were away from Stone Villa, and soon away from Somerleigh also, to begin their married life by a peep at Paris and Switzerland. And there, amidst the gaieties of the gay city, and the wondrous beauties of the Swiss lakes and passes, and mountains and valleys, in whose grandeur God seems so near, we must leave them.

CHAPTER XVII.

MISSIONARY WORK IN SOMERLEIGH.

THEY worked hard in regard to foreign missions amongst the Sunday-schools of Somerleigh. There was a praiseworthy rivalship of effort—the only rivalship surely that ought to exist between the various sections of the Christian Church, as to whose Sunday-schools should work hardest, and whose organizations for making them work should be the most successfully planned. The annual meetings of the London Missionary Society especially was quite a time of festival to all the Sunday-schools of the Congregationalists and Baptists, who delighted to support that noble and far-reaching Society. And both these bodies were wealthy and influential in Somerleigh.

But they could never teach the children to be any better beggars than the Wesleyans, who, from the time of their noble founder downwards, have had a wonderful and excellent method of systematically making their members contribute perseveringly to religious purposes, and of bringing in the young to be *workers* for God, not merely recipients of His bounty.

It is very beautiful to note with what zeal children do work. Many a mother with a restless, fine-spirited boy beside her, continually wanting something for him to do and not knowing what next to set him about, has been thankful when her child has entered into the field of mission labour, and found in it scope for his spare energies. Children, fired with enthusiasm by the admirable addresses of missionaries in Sunday-schools, have come home to plan and contrive and devise many means, at once pretty and novel, of raising

money. They have worked in their play hours, and felt a good deal happier than if they were playing, in order to obtain the price of a Testament in Hindoostanee for some converted Indian; they have sacrificed their poultry, their rabbits, their flowers, their fruit, to help to send missionaries to Madagascar; they have tramped about with weary little feet for an extra penny or two to put into their mission-box. And God will bless all His dear little workers who labour from simple honest love to Him.

Annie Burnard's class, ever since she had begun to work at the school, had become somewhat remarkable for the large amount which, in proportion to its numbers, it collected for foreign missions. The children's cards were brought in full in wonderfully quick time, and they took fresh cards, and had sometimes filled them also before other children had obtained money enough for the first. Annie did not believe in giving children cards with only the spaces for the money on them; all those she issued had lines for each donor to put his name, with a printed request that, however small the amount given, every one would kindly put his name or initials. She was very careful in keeping the missionary accounts of the boys, and to train them to be equally careful themselves. She was also ready to suggest means by which they might add to the income of the missionary box, which every boy kept on his mantelshelf, or some other secure place, for a year, and then brought to her to open, for she had a peculiar key which fitted all the boxes, which she had had made of precisely one pattern.

She took care to tell them from time to time the interesting missionary stories which she read. She had her "missionary Sunday," as she called it, once a month, when she related to them some facts about the particular mission-field in which they happened at the time to be most interested, and also told them of any place where she had reason to believe money

was most wanted. At the year's end the boys themselves always elected what should be done with the money in their boxes. What was collected on the cards usually went to the General Mission Fund.

The praise of the London Missionary Society is, or ought to be, in all the Churches. They have had, and have still, noble-hearted, earnest men among them, some of whose names are endeared to the world. The anniversary came in the spring at Somerleigh, just as all nature was feeling the warmer touch of the sun and bursting into beauty.

An early morning service was held for the children in the great Town Hall, and it grew to be a practice, how originated we know not, that every child should come flower-laden to this service, and that after it was over the flowers should be distributed and conveyed to the various hospitals and infirmaries of the city. It was a pleasant blending of home and foreign mission work, and perhaps the children of our Sunday-schools are not enough taught to be interested in Home Missions, which seem, alas! when we consider the vicious condition, particularly of our large towns and cities, and the ignorance of our rural districts, equally necessary with those to foreign lands. The children of wealthy and well-to-do parents who had gardens, brought to the hall rich and costly flowers, the blooms of greenhouses and well-ordered parterres; the children of the poor rifled the woods and hedges, and came laden with the early wild floral treasures which for exquisite loveliness may rival the beauties of the garden.

So the great hall, large as it was, was perfumed and adorned with the delicious odours and decorative presence of primroses, wood anemones, white and blue violets, periwinkles, heaths, hepaticas, geraniums, polyanthuses, crocuses, cowslips, cyclamens, primulas, and many other flowers. The speakers looking down from the platform

saw before them a company of human flowers, some from the greenhouses, some from the gardens, some from the hedgerows, of society, and each of them adorned with specimens of the lovely blossoms with which God has enriched the earth.

And oh! how many weary eyes later in the day feasted on the fair flowerets when they were taken to the hospitals, how many pale, hollow-cheeked creatures stretched out their thin hands anxiously and lovingly for the one or two sweet blossoms which might fall to their share. People waste flowers sometimes; no one who knows their priceless value in hospitals could bear to do so.

Picture Annie Burnard, then, amongst her boys at the early morning missionary meeting in the spring following Maggie's wedding. Harry and Maggie have come too, and brought little Walter Stanhope, who is on a visit to his uncle and aunt. It is only seven o'clock, but the great hall is thronging fast with the children, many of their parents, and teachers. Walter has a choice bouquet from Maggie's little greenhouse. Annie's children are fond of "going in," as they call it, for one particular flower. This year they have "gone in" for cowslips, and the result is that there is a rich golden glow around Annie, and a delicate perfume arises from the deliciously fresh flowers which grow in profusion around Somerleigh, which the boys have gathered from the fields that morning with the dew on them. There is an especial interest in the meeting this morning, for among them at this anniversary is a venerable man, a missionary of missionaries, a man who for nearly fifty years lived a self-made—nay, rather a God-made—exile from his native land in order to carry the "glad tidings of great joy" to the Bechuanas and other tribes of Southern Africa.

The parents and teachers present, who were many of them, when they were children, stirred up to missionary

work by this good man's writings of his doings amongst the Bechuanas, look with veneration at the still erect figure, the flowing white beard, the countenance embrowned by exposure to Afric's sun, the fine forehead, the manly features grown old in the service of his God, and listen with intense interest to the voice somewhat weak now, with his fourscore years and his life of privation and toil, but once strong and ringing as a clarion's note. Such men epitomise in their own grand lives the histories of missions from the days when the fishermen of Galilee received the great missionary diploma straight from the lips of the Son of God, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature," even until now. And from that time to this the long line of missionaries is unbroken, and shall be until all nations shall become "the kingdoms of God and of His Christ." When the venerable missionary arose to speak, after the fresh clear children's voices had carolled forth Heber's unrivalled missionary hymn, the vast congregation was moved as the heart of one man, from the least child present to the oldest man or woman. Many a mother was in tears, for there were hallowed memories connected with this speaker. They themselves had been brought as little children, by mothers who were now saints in heaven, to hear the utterances of this dear apostle of the Bechuanas when he came to England in his prime to tell what the Lord was doing for His black children. So all reverently listened with something of the tenderness with which the company gathered round Paul when they sorrowed most of all because "they should see his face no more."

Dr. Moffat gave some account to the children of the sufferings of little black children through the disregard of human life that once prevailed in Africa before the Gospel was preached there, so that when a child was sick, instead of being tenderly nursed back to health, or until it died, it

was buried underground or left to be eaten by the wild beasts. He also spoke very earnestly of the blessings of peace which Christianity introduced amongst the black tribes of Southern Africa. Indeed, both Annie and Maggie were interested to observe in what intimate relationship the missionary placed Christianity and peace, as cause and effect. They could but feel to wish that over the nations of whites, who profess Christianity, but spend so many millions to keep up armaments, and who so eagerly and passionately engage in war, the spirit of the converted Africans would alight, for they never appear to believe for one instant that Christ is anything but what the Bible declares Him to be, "The Prince of Peace, of the increase of whose government and peace there shall be no end."

After Dr. Moffat had spoken, and by his sound sense, clear judgment, and pleasant playfulness, won the admiration and affection of young and old, a missionary from India was introduced to the meeting, who related with vivid earnestness and much eloquence the plan of missionary work which he had adopted and been enabled to carry on with success. He described graphically to the children, not only the kind of boys and girls who came to be taught in the schools, but the kind of audiences who gathered round him when he went to preach in the towns and villages. He made them see for themselves the brown-skinned little Indian boys loitering on their errands or pausing in their play to listen to the strange white man from England. He told them of the shepherds, who are very much sunk in ignorance, and greatly looked down upon by the rest of mankind, and he described his plan of teaching. How to the shepherds he came as himself a shepherd in the employ of the "Good Shepherd" of the sheep. To the agriculturists he came as a seed-sower, and told them of the parable of the different kinds of soil

into which the good seed fell; how to the fishermen he came as a fisher with his net to catch men, and told them the sea stories of the New Testament, showing how admirably suited the Bible teaching is to arrest the attention of all classes of men, if thoughtfully applied to them.

Frank Drew listened and grew intensely interested, and longed that he too could become a missionary and introduce the Gospel to some heathen land. It did not seem possible for him now, but the boy was patient and persevering, and thus he reasoned: "It did not seem easy to Henry Martyn nor to David Livingstone when they were boys, but when they were determined about it they managed to make it come right. If God will accept me for a missionary, boy as I am, ignorant as I am, poor as I am, I will work to that end; and as He helps me I will not faint nor grow weary, but will plod on till I reach the height. I wonder what dear Mrs. Burnard will say."

It is a capital thing for a boy like Frank to feel he has a friend in his Sunday-school teacher. Whatever else they may or may not be, no Sunday-school teacher should fail to be regarded as the true friend of his or her scholars. Frank was used to consult Mrs. Burnard about everything of importance to him.

So one day when he was going up on an errand to the downs he asked his master, Mr. Vine, if he might have a few minutes for himself to see his Sunday-school teacher, and his master gave him leave. He could trust Frank, and so he was often willing to grant him little favours. Many a boy would have taken the time he wanted for himself, and pretended that he had been kept waiting, if he had been found fault with; but Frank was too honourable to loiter away his master's time, or to use it for himself without leave.

When her housemaid told Annie Burnard that Frank

Drew was at the door and wished to speak to her, she desired the girl to ask him into her husband's home office; a room which was, however, used just as much by herself as by him.

"Good morning, Frank. Well, what is your business to-day?"

"Good morning, ma'am."

Frank had set down his empty basket in the hall, and now stood, cap in hand, his pleasant young face all aglow with his new thoughts and hopes.

"I have thought so much about the anniversary meeting this year, Mrs. Burnard."

"Yes, dear boy, I know you have; I could see it by your face as you listened. Did you want to tell me so?"

"Yes, and something else," replied Frank.

"What?" said Annie, gently, seeing he needed a little encouragement. "Have you some new plan for adding to our funds?"

"No, I wish I had," said Frank. "That isn't it, Mrs. Burnard; but I want to be a missionary myself."

"You do? Oh Frank! I am so glad," said Annie, cordially, and the flush on her sweet face was reflected on that of the boy. Such sympathy as hers helps to make good boys into noble men.

"You don't think it is altogether impossible, Mrs. Burnard? I was so afraid you would, and I promised if you did to think nothing more about it, because I was sure you knew better than I did."

"Promised? I don't understand," said Annie.

"I mean I promised myself I would abide by what you said, teacher."

"Then I hope I have said rightly," said Mrs. Burnard. "There have been stranger things come to pass than that you should be a missionary, Frank; but if you give your

mind to this hope there are three things you will want, and they all begin with a P."

"Perseverance?" suggested Frank.

"You are right. What else?"

"Prayer?"

"Yes. What is the other?"

"I can't tell, Mrs. Burnard. Oh yes; I know! Pluck!" Annie laughed merrily.

"That is not the one I meant, but it is extremely necessary for you; add it, by all means."

"And what is the other, then, teacher?"

"Patience, to be sure, Frank."

"*Of course!*" said Frank, emphatically. "Well, now then, Mrs. Burnard, I'll remember them—Prayer, Patience, Perseverance, and Pluck."

"If you take my advice, Frank, this thought will determine you to go on steadily in your present occupation for two or three years, and see whether your mind continues fixed on being a missionary. If it does, I think I can promise you, that by the time you are eighteen, you shall have the opportunity given you of going forward in the path you have chosen. For the present, I will give you one help, which I hope you will make a good use of. Missionaries need to be very clever people, to have their brain powers at their tongues' ends. Now the more you can exercise your brain for the next three years as well as your legs, the better, always in reason, of course. We must not use either legs or brains beyond their proper limit. What I was about to propose is, that you should go to an evening school, and get on with your reading and writing and ciphering. Remember, there are very strict accounts to be kept at missionary stations for the parent society. After a year or so I should like you to begin some foreign language, French or German, which will help

you greatly. The mere knowledge of how different languages may be constructed is very necessary for a missionary. This amount of teaching I shall be very happy to pay for, and you, I know, will try to profit by it all you can. Remember what that great authority on teaching, Dr. Temple, says: 'A vast amount of mere drudgery in learning it is absolutely necessary for us to pass through before we can reach those degrees of knowledge when learning becomes a true pleasure.' This drudgery, then, is honourable toil, and must not discourage. When you flounder hopelessly amidst vulgar fractions, or stick in the mud of wearying tenses and cases, look on to the golden heights of learning beyond, and persevere. You must busy yourself to find out where there are night schools in your neighbourhood, and bring me word about them, and I will make inquiries and arrange with the master."

"Oh! how good you are, Mrs. Burnard!" said Frank, gratefully.

"Not good, dear Frank, only anxious to help forward a young brother in Christ's special service. You know well that I think all honest life work, all our daily employments, however mean man may think them, are Christ's service, and to be done for and to Him; but if there is an errand in which He specially sends out His followers, it is certainly into the mission fields—the fields that are white already to harvest, and where the labourers are so few."

"I must not stay longer now, Mrs. Burnard; I only asked master for a few minutes. But I do so thank you."

"Don't exceed your time, Frank," said Annie, smiling; "that would be a poor beginning of missionary effort."

So Annie Burnard sent the boy away with his young heart comforted, and knit to the wise and loving heart of his teacher.

"I have had Frank Drew here to-day, Edward," she said

when Mr. Burnard came in; "and what do you think he wanted?"

"A new missionary card?" Mr. Burnard questioned, laughingly. "He certainly is an extraordinary boy for getting money for missions."

"Because his heart is in it," said Annie. "But guess again, you are very 'hot,' as the children say when they play hide and seek; almost 'burning,' in fact, but you haven't guessed it quite."

"Why, he doesn't want to be a missionary himself, does he?"

"Yes," said Annie, a little surprised. "Why, whatever made you guess it?"

"My dearest love," said Edward Burnard, "you put me on the right track, and told me to keep ahead, and then wonder that I reached the port."

"Well, isn't it nice of the boy?"

"Yes, very; provided that it isn't mere excitement. He is a good sort of child, that Frank of yours, he never shirks work. What did you tell him, Annie?"

"I advised him to stay where he is for two or three more years and see if the feeling continues."

"Sagacious little wife, that was excellent; and did the boy agree?"

"Perfectly, dear. I have promised him one thing, however, that he shall attend a night school, so as to keep up all the knowledge he has, and attain more."

"I don't think you could have done better, Annie; just encouragement enough, and not too much. And what do you propose to yourself for him, after that, dear?"

"Three years is a long time to look forward to," said Annie, as she sat by her husband, who had thrown himself rather wearily on a sofa; "what is the matter to-night, dear? I think you are too tired to talk about Frank;" and

her hands wandered caressingly through his hair, and felt his forehead, and her loving eyes watched him anxiously.

"No, I am only tired, dearest," he said, "and I should like to hear your plans for Frank. You always scheme so neatly and so moderately, Annie; so different to the wild extravagance of most women."

Annie laughed. "Perhaps you will think I am getting extravagant if I tell you what I have been thinking. We have a great deal of money for two people; why should we not spend fifty, or sixty, or a hundred pounds a year educating Frank as a missionary?"

"I have not the least objection, dear, provided that the time of his probation at the grocer's is not shortened, and that he conducts himself well meantime, and sticks to his resolve. You must not be disappointed if he should not. He has attended two or three specially interesting missionary meetings lately. This may wear away when their memory departs. I don't say it will, but don't be too sanguine."

"I don't think I feel so," said Annie, "but it will be a great pleasure, a great responsibility, if God should take one of my boys for a missionary. Isn't it long," she added, her mind reverting to her own and her husband's schemes of benevolence, "since we heard of your little Scotch lassie?"

"Yes, I have been thinking so, and wondering why, and expecting Miss Lorimer to send me her quarterly account. What a wonderfully exact good business woman she is."

"I think the Scotch have a special talent for that sort of thing, figures and calculations. All I ever knew had it," said Annie.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"MONKEY."

AMONGST Annie's class was a very troublesome, mischievous boy, whom his companions nicknamed "Monkey." "Monkey" was also his cognomen at the day school he attended, indeed it might be said to have been thence surreptitiously introduced into Annie's class, for she never suffered them to use an opprobrious nickname to each other in her hearing, without insisting on their offering an apology. But it was almost difficult to say in this instance whether the boy or the animal should have received the apology.

"Monkey's" real name was Frank Bellman, but few of the boys ever thought of calling him by it. "Monkey" was not by any means of an amiable disposition. If he received a nut, he was, like other monkeys, very much inclined to throw the shell in the donor's face. He had not, apparently, the slightest idea of gratitude. Annie Burnard's patience and gentleness seemed to be thrown away upon this boy, he made no effort whatever to please her. He often endeavoured to play mean tricks upon her, and was only prevented by the other boys finding it out in time, and indignantly resenting his conduct. In the midst of the most serious subjects, or the most earnest, loving conversations between the teacher and her class, this one boy would, by his sly grimaces, or covert pinching and teasing, draw off the attention of almost all the other lads.

"I can't think why you are bothered with 'Monkey' any longer, Mrs. Burnard," said Frank Drew to Annie one day.

"'Monkey!' who is 'Monkey,' Frank?"

"I mean Frank Bellman, of course," said Frank Drew, colouring, "but he is a real plague, and more mischievous than any monkey I ever saw."

"There are a good many species," said Annie, drily.

"You *can't* like him, teacher," said Frank.

"*Like* him, perhaps not in one sense. But oh! Frank, when I remember that my Saviour is his Saviour, and that the poor boy needs to learn this, and will never be happy till he does, why then I feel to *love* him. Besides, Frank, if I cannot be bothered, as you say, myself, how, in common charity, should I give him to another teacher?"

"He'd better be expelled the school; he is a regular plague to us all, teacher."

"Yet Christ bears with him," said Annie, softly. "No, Frank, I can't recommend that he should be expelled; while a boy is not absolutely unbearable, I hope I am honestly willing to keep him. Frank, you must not expect that poor Frank Bellman is the only troublesome creature in existence. They say there is a 'fly in every pot of ointment;' perhaps this poor child is our fly. We must try and dissolve him in the ointment."

Frank laughed.

"I mean, melt him with loving-kindness," said Annie, laughing too. "Just think, if you undertake missionary work when you are a man, how many mischievous, interfering meddlers you must expect, who will worry you and concern themselves about your business instead of their own, ten times as much as 'Monkey' does now. So exercise your patience, Frank, sharpen that weapon on 'Monkey's' behalf, and it will stand you in all the better stead for more serious impediments to progress by-and-by."

It was a strange fact that the head of this monkey-dispositioned boy was a good deal like that animal. The lower part of his face protruded, his eyes were small and

sunken, his forehead flat, and ears high up. Indeed, no doubt, it was this resemblance, quite as much as his mischievous propensities, that first induced the nickname. Darwin would have delighted himself much in him, as a visible link. But then, if we come to consider the stray connections of this sort between men and animals, it would be quite as easy to believe ourselves to have graduated from an ass, or an ox, a pig, a bull-dog, a rabbit, or a sheep; for there are people to be met with who put you in mind irresistibly of each of these in their countenances.

It did not by any means add to Frank Drew's comfort at Mr. Vine's, when "Monkey" was bound apprentice by Mr. Bellman to that respectable grocer. Accidentally, on Frank's part, there had originated a rivalry between the two boys as to which of them should obtain most money on their mission cards and in their boxes during the year. For, queer as it may seem, "Monkey" had shown himself most zealous of them all, next to Frank, in obtaining money for foreign missions. He was the only son of his parents, who were thriving people. The father was a wholesale potato-merchant and provision-dealer, and was reputed to be fast making money. Mrs. Burnard did not wonder that "Monkey" managed to obtain pretty large donations.

Frank Bellman, in his mean, narrow soul, owed Frank Drew a grudge for several reasons. First, because he had never himself quite reached the amount of money which Frank Drew collected in a year for missions. Secondly, because he believed, though this was altogether false, that Frank Drew had introduced his nickname to the Sunday-school class; thirdly, because Frank Drew was a favourite with his teacher and all the rest of the boys; and, fifthly, because he had heard his father call Frank Drew a smart, handsome lad, terms which he felt disagreeably sure no one would ever apply to himself. And so he determined to

"pay him out." Frank Bellman never guessed all that this wicked determination on his part would lead to. When we dare to put evil rolling, we never can guess where it will stop, if, indeed, it ever stops at all in this world.

He persuaded his father that he would like to be bound apprentice to a grocer, and to no other grocer so much as to Mr. Vine; and, as Mr. Vine went to the same chapel, had an excellent business, and a deserved reputation for being an upright man, Mr. Bellman consented. But Frank Bellman's purpose was solely that he might have opportunities to annoy and harass Frank Drew, and to bring him into disgrace.

Frank Drew was by this time quite a favourite with Mr. Vine, whom he had now served with diligence and fidelity for some years. He was also a favourite with the shopmen, one of whom was an assistant, and the other an apprentice who had almost finished his time. The assistant was an elderly man, and he had strongly advised Mr. Vine to take Frank Drew behind the counter.

"The boy's manners are good, sir; they would win custom. If you took him without a premium, you might be better off than if you took many other lads with."

"It is certain," said Mr. Vine, who was a cheerful, energetic, bustling, impetuous little man, with a rosy face, very red whiskers and fair hair; "it is certain that if I take Frank I shall not have a premium with him. His father is a very steady man now, thanks to Mr. Duncan, but he has a great deal to make up, he got sadly out of gear in his old drinking days. No, there's no premium there. But, as you say, Stapleton, I might do worse, yes, very much worse, than take a smart, well-behaved, *principled* boy like Frank without a premium. I'll see what Mrs. Vine says."

Unfortunately, "seeing what Mrs. Vine said" generally deprived Mr. Vine altogether of his generous purposes.

Mr. Vine very often did generous deeds, but not when he first "saw what Mrs. Vine said." She was the kind of woman whose creed concerning giving seemed to be summed up in one of her oft-quoted, parrot-like statements: "Others may do as they like, my dear Vine" (we hope "others" were grateful for this kind permission on the part of the lady), "but WE *can't afford it.*" She had three little children, all girls, and they furnished an abundant excuse to her for "not being lavish of the bounties o Providence."

"If there had been a boy, my dear Vine, a boy to prop up the house and take the business, it would have been different, but with three poor little helpless girls to be provided for, it is certain we can't afford it."

There was certainly a possibility that one day the house of Vine might be "propped up" with a son and heir to "take the business" in due season. Mr. Stapleton, who was a shrewd man, used to speculate if that event *should* ever take place, as to what new impediment Mrs. Vine would then suggest. The poor woman, surrounded by her "three helpless little daughters," certainly did not see that her husband could afford to take an apprentice without a premium, even though he were likely to bring customers to the shop, and was so pleasant and obliging a boy as Frank Drew.

When, a few days later, Mr. Bellman came to speak to Mr. Vine about taking his son Frank as an apprentice,—he had heard that there was a vacancy,—Mrs. Vine looked as jubilant as it was possible for Mrs. Vine to look, for she was a remarkably solid woman, without a particle of warmth or enthusiasm about her. She thought and declared emphatically that her interposition against taking Frank Drew had been decidedly "guided by Providence."

Mr. Stapleton, to whom, amongst many others, she

repeated this—for when she manufactured a sentence she was apt to be proud of it, and make it do excellent service—could not agree with her, and said as much.

"I am sorry you can't see it, Mr. Stapleton; some people *can't* see things, but," she repeated, "any one else could see that my interposition to prevent Frank Drew being taken as an apprentice by Mr. Vine was quite providential."

Mr. Stapleton did not think it even then, still less did he a few weeks after, when "Monkey," having been amongst them sufficiently long to rub off the small amount of shyness and propriety with which he was gifted, began to show his troublesome disposition, for which, as every one may guess, he had abundant opportunities in a grocer's shop.

Weights were missing, paper bags mysteriously disappeared, scoops were hidden amongst articles for which they were never used, drawers were put in wrong places, salt was mixed with sugar, and pepper with mustard, till at last customers began to complain of the queer compounds that reached them; and "Monkey," if questioned, looked so demure or stupid, that Mr. Vine could not believe in his pranks, and could only apologise and promise that such misadventures should not happen again. Somehow or other, "Monkey" always managed to lead his master's suspicions towards Frank Drew, and even declared to Mrs. Vine, with pathetic whimpering, "that he always knew before that Frank Drew didn't like him, and now he saw that he was doing queer things on purpose to try to get him into blame."

And Mrs. Vine, whose dull, dismal temperament made her especially suspicious, and ready to believe evil of any one, gave willing credence to Frank Bellman's complaints. There seemed to be a danger of the grocer's household dividing against itself, Mr. Stapleton siding with the one Frank, Mrs. Vine with the other, with poor Mr. Vine in an awkward position between the two parties, and the "helpless

little daughters" as "neutrals." The servant girl, Sally, very soon sided with the assistant and Frank Drew, for "Monkey," whom she had at first preferred to Frank, as being in a superior rank of life, speedily put her out of all patience.

Mr. Bellman had considered it advisable, perhaps for his own peace, that his son, on becoming an apprentice, should board and lodge at his master's, and he occupied a neat, well-furnished little room at the top of the house next to those of Mr. Stapleton and of the girl Sally. Poor Sally! what she endured for some weeks from "Monkey" can only be slightly glanced at here. The cat was introduced into her room on several occasions, and was sometimes placed in her cupboard. Her caps "came to grief," as she said, more rapidly than in all her experience before; and one night, no sooner had she laid herself on her pillow, tired with her day's work, than she began to sneeze, and went on sneezing, too, as the consequence of the pepper so freely sprinkled thereon. "He's the tiresomest, mischievousest young scaramouch that ever was born, he is," said Sally, between laughing and crying, and sneezing at almost every word most vigorously, "I'll tell his master for him, that I will; 'Monkey' they call him, and 'Monkey' he is."

And so she did tell Mr. Vine; and "Monkey" looked so idiotic, and seemed to have such intense difficulty to comprehend what had been done to Sally's pillow, that Mr. Vine, convinced as he was that it could not have been the work of Frank Drew, or indeed of any one but the new apprentice, thought it useless to say any more, and ended the matter by giving his servant a key for her room door, and advising her to keep it locked, which, for a long time, she did most scrupulously.

For a time "Monkey," being tired of these new, but minor pranks, behaved more decently in the house, and only

worried Frank Drew to his heart's content. It was very difficult in the face of this petty persecution for Frank always to restrain his temper, and sometimes he said what he was sorry for afterwards. And then, when Frank was thoroughly roused, "Monkey" would challenge him "to fight it out like a man." Mr. Stapleton one day overheard the two boys in the court where Frank was employed emptying a sugar barrel, and "Monkey" was watching him under the pretence of washing some bottles.

"You coward, you," said "Monkey"; "afraid to fight, eh? He'll spoil his pretty face, and Mrs. Burnard will get to know, and he's Mrs. Burnard's pet boy, 'cause he's so good, ain't he?"

"You dare to talk about teacher like that," said Frank Drew, firing up in a moment.

"Come, now," said "Monkey," irritatingly, "come now, if you've any dispute with me, Frank Drew, fight it out like a man."

"Like a beast, you mean, youngster," said Mr. Stapleton, coming into the court, as if by accident, "beasts fight when they are angry, but men who have minds learn to conquer their passions, and keep down their tempers. No fighting here, Frank Bellman; it is against your master's rules."

CHAPTER XIX.

A STRANGE LETTER AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

EDWARD and Annie Burnard were at breakfast as usual one morning, when the postman came up the garden, and put the letters in the box, and with his smart "rat-tat" went away again. And, as often happened, Edward Burnard himself fetched the letters from the box. He handed his wife one, and opened one of the two others which he held in his hand.

Annie's was merely a printed circular of a drapery show, and she lifted her eyes from it almost immediately to her husband's face with a smile on her lips, about to remark on the perseverance of the drapers in sending such missives. What was her surprise to see the dear face opposite to hers grow very ashen in hue, and more and more grave as he proceeded to read his letter.

"What is it, Edward?" She thought of nothing less than ruin in money matters, and she was brave to meet that; she did not know that here was news of a loss which no money could meet.

"Come here, dear," he answered; and she rose, and stood behind him with her arms round his neck, and her head on his shoulder, reading over it the words that were written on the letter:—

"'Edinburgh, August, 18—.

"'My dear Brother,—

"'Edward Burnard——.'"

Annie ejaculated a surprised, almost startled, "Oh! Edward!"

"'I suppose you will be rather astonished to receive this;

or, have you not known from the beginning that I was your sister, only you were ashamed to own me? I half think so.'"

Edward Burnard leaned his head on his hand for a few moments, and the paper on which the cruel words were written trembled in his fingers. Annie's lips were softly kissing his forehead, and as if their warm pressure revived him, he raised his head presently, and the husband and wife went on reading together:—

"'No good will come to you, Edward Burnard, however happy you may be now, of your neglecting the little sister you once professed to be so fond of.'"

"Effie! Effie!" said the strong man, in tones of tender reproach, bowing himself forward in an agony of grief, "who has taught you to pen these things to me?"

"My dearest," said Annie, clinging to him, and coming closer to his side in his grief, "do go on, and try to understand it first; what *does* it mean? I thought that poor sister of yours was dead."

"We never *knew* that she was. I see it, Annie, without reading another word—Effie is Jessie's mother."

"The little Flower of the Grassmarket, our little Jessie, *your niece?*" said Annie, bewildered; "oh, do go on and see certainly."

"'I know nothing of the events at home,'" said the letter, "'since I left it so many years ago. But this I do know, Edward,—that if you, who professed such love to me, had acted as a brother of spirit would have done, that wretch Maxted would not have gone unpunished.'"

Edward Burnard groaned. "Annie, Annie," he said, "I fear now that she was never married to him."

"Read on," said Annie.

"'He deceived me, as you who knew the ways of the world so well might have guessed he would do, with a false

marriage. Our child, a son, was born and died in France I came back alone, within five years of going there, and landed at Leith. Since then I have done anything and everything for a living.' "

Again Edward Burnard groaned heavily.

" 'I was too proud to write for help where it was not willingly offered to me.'"

"Oh! Effie, my child, my child; let me go to her at once."

"Read on first, Edward, and read more quickly."

"Annie, darling, this letter is burning itself into my heart." He looked as if it were, such pain was in his face.

" 'Jessie is my child. All other information regarding her parentage I absolutely and for ever refuse to give. I have never loved her.' "

Now it was Annie's turn to cry, "Oh, Edward! poor little innocent darling, I can give her a mother's love."

A thought of the sweet, plaintive, wistful blue eyes that had been upturned to his as he knocked little Jessie down smote upon Edward Burnard's mind at that moment. How that sentence of unlovingness in her mother's letter explained their unchildlike, sad expression.

" 'She has always been in my way. She is in my way now. I cannot answer for myself if I remain with her. The child is sufficiently like me, I should have thought, to remind you of me too strongly for your suspicions not to have been aroused. Why didn't you make a few more inquiries then, and find me out?' "

"Why, poor wretched Effie," said Annie, "you were in prison."

"Jessie's face did haunt me, Annie; it set me thinking over all Effie's story as I had not done for years."

"You never told me, dearest; when was it?"

"One damp, dull day at the office, when I was not

particularly busy; but her assumed surname, and the fact of there being so many Effies and Euphemias in Scotland, put me off the track again, and made me think myself merely foolish for fancying a resemblance. But I wish I had made a few inquiries, as Effie says."

"Perhaps you will find her now."

"I think not," said Edward Burnard; "she writes this from Edinburgh, and posts it at Glasgow. She has gone abroad." He continued reading:—

"'I don't know what makes me write to you now; I am still too proud to accept any aid from you. Perhaps the truth is that I can't have that child's life upon my soul. I have a chance to go to America; it is a great country, and you need not expect to find me in it. I am not going in a way that either you or Mrs. Burnard would approve for a 'sister.' But I am going, and I am leaving the child behind. I throw the burden of guilt, if she is neglected after this, from my own soul on yours. But I quite expect that you will, on the contrary, make much of her, and rear her in such luxury as she has never dreamed of. It was worth while to be thrown down and break an arm to find such a rich and affectionate uncle. Unless the lady you set to be a spy upon my actions has removed her before this reaches you, you will find Jessie still in Fraser's Close, Grassmarket. I make over all my property in her to you.

"'Your sister,

"'EFFIE BURNARD.

"'We met once upon North Bridge: did you not see me? Of course not; my mean attire would shame you!'"

"Oh! Effie, Effie, my poor lost little darling; my child, my child!"

It was the cry of another David over another Absalom. Annie mingled her tears with those of her husband, and together they prayed that the mother's heart might soften

to her innocent little child; the reproachful sister to her loving brother, and that at last the wanderer might weary of the husks, and come back for bread to the Father's house.

"Of course, dearest, you will fetch our Jessie?" said Annie, presently.

"Shan't we go together to fetch her, Annie?"

"That would be a treat," said Annie, "and I should see Scotland; but," she added, her bright manner fading, "how cruel of me to speak in that tone when you have such a bitter sorrow to bear."

"My dear, don't say that," replied Edward Burnard; "if I had not your love for me and joy in me to help me, I think, knowing all I know now from Effie's own hand, my senses would hardly bear it. I see now, Annie, as I have not seen before, that, wild and unkind though that letter is —my only excuse for it is that it was doubtless written under the inspiration of whisky—there is some truth in it. I have been too ready to let things go, too quick in giving up the search for her. The Maxteds promised faithfully to let me know if they ever heard anything about her from their brother, and to keep me informed of his whereabouts, but they never wrote, and when I addressed letters of inquiry to them they were returned through the Dead Letter Office. And I saw in a paper about that time that he had sold his father's mills and left Lancashire to live abroad. After that there seemed no hope of tracing him without such information as I did not possess. But first of all, Annie, now I will go to Glasgow, and try to discover what ships went to America about this date." He turned to the letter in his hand; there was no date beyond the month, August. It might have been written on the 1st, and this was the 31st. Many ships might have sailed away from Glasgow and have reached America between the time of her writing and their receiving that strange letter.

"Had we not better open Miss Lorimer's letter, and see whether that throws any light upon the matter?" said Annie.

"True, dear, I had forgotten it." He broke open the envelope at once. Miss Lorimer's was an unusually long letter. She first of all apologised for the delay in sending her accounts. She had been seriously indisposed, even ill, which was her only excuse: as also for her apparent neglect of the child, placed under her care, which in present circumstances she feared would seem especially culpable. The first week she had been ill she sent an errand-boy with the money for Jessie's mother to Fraser's Close, in an envelope sealed and addressed, and had told him to be sure and inquire for both mother and child. He brought back word that Mrs. Macdonald had not been at home for the last few days, but that the child, who had taken the packet, sent her humble thanks, and was so sorry to hear that Miss Lorimer was ill.

"In short," said the letter, "such a message as I should expect from the loving heart of little Jessie. A fortnight instead of a week elapsed before I sent again, and this I now most exceedingly regret. But in the bustle of the house through my indisposition, the matter was altogether overlooked. And I had taken no notice whatever of Euphemia Macdonald's being away from home, for that has been of such frequent occurrence that the dear little child has, I fear, passed a somewhat lonely life, especially since last year, when her good old friend Biddy Macarthy died. On going to Fraser's Close to-day, what was my consternation to find that the woman had not been back to her child since she left her, more than three weeks before, and that when drunk she had been heard to say that she 'had been plagued with her long enough.' She left no clue whatever to her whereabouts. My own advice in this emergency would be that you seek a place for Jessie in one of our many excellent

foundation schools, where she will be usefully educated and trained. As soon as I know your wishes respecting her, if they should tend in this direction, I will use all the interest in my power to obtain her a gift to one or other of them."

"Kind, Christian-hearted woman," said Annie; "what trouble she is willing to take for others. I feel as if I should like to know her very much."

"You will soon have that pleasure, Annie. When can you be ready to start?"

"To-morrow, Edward; will that do?"

"Do, my prompt little wife?—most excellently. I did not think you could be ready so soon."

"Harry and Maggie will look after the house for us, and Mrs. Drew will take the oversight of the servants. It will be a nice change for her and little Janie. I can always run away easily, dear, when you are going. It is much harder work to stay behind."

So that morning Annie drove in her pretty little pony-carriage, a fresh love-gift from her husband, to that husband's foundry with him, and then she continued her drive to Streatham Road, where, on Eglinton Terrace, at No. 7, lived Mr. and Mrs. Harry Duncan. It was a comfortable and elegant house, perfectly suited to the occupants; built of white stone, with a light balcony, on which the drawing-room opened, which was always adorned with flowers. Indeed, all along the balconies of Eglinton Terrace, creepers hung in pretty festoons, and brilliant geraniums in handsome jars, and other rich-hued blossoms made it very gay, particularly in summer and autumn. Some elegant bead-baskets, filled with pots of musk and minophla, and other dependent plants, hung from the roof of Maggie's balcony. She was in it that morning, watering and pruning her flowers, when Annie's pony-carriage made the swift sweep of a corner and came unexpectedly into view.

"Annie at this hour! What can be the matter? Something unusual surely," and she was about to step down to meet her, when Annie, seeing her, signalled to her to wait where she was, and she would come up. Buttons, who sat on the small seat behind, jumped down and held the reins, and Annie alighted.

"Nothing amiss, Annie?" questioned Maggie, as the sisters met.

"Not with either of us, dear. But I have so much to tell you. Come into your drawing-room, and let us have a long chat."

So Annie Burnard recounted the matter from the beginning, softening, as she repeated it, the sad story of Effie's life.

Maggie, who did not even know that Edward Burnard had had a sister, was of course exceedingly surprised.

"And what shall you do with this little Jessie?"

"We mean to fetch her home. Ours is her only home, but she shall find it is a loving one," said Annie, with tears in her eyes, thinking of how often the poor child must, consciously or unconsciously, have yearned for the mother-love that had never been accorded to her.

"You are going to adopt her, Annie?"

"Yes, dear."

"How strange it will seem. Well, you always wished for a child to take care of, Annie, and now you will have one."

Annie smiled.

"And how old is this little Scotch lassie?" asked Maggie; "I suppose she is Scotch?"

"I think there can be no doubt that she was at least born in Scotland. She is—let me see, how long have we been married? Four years. Oh, yes, she must be about eight or nine. She was a very little thing, if you remember, when the accident happened."

"What a romance it is. As good as a story, as people say."

"Have you not often thought, Maggie—I have—that the unwritten romances of people's lives, in some cases of those whom we least suspect, are even more strange than those which are conceived in the busy brains of the novelists? But as to the *good* of it—oh! Maggie," and here Annie gave way to the burst of grief she had hitherto checked; "its effect on Edward is terrible. Do come to Rose Villa this afternoon and dine with us, for I am so anxious to know what you think of him. He looks to me years older for these hours of sorrow."

"Who fetches the little lady?" inquired Maggie.

"We do. We start to-morrow."

"What! are you going with Edward? Oh! that is right, and will do him ever so much good. Don't be *too* sympathetic, Annie; that is rather your fault. You should see how I smooth and coax, and sometimes rattle my dear Harry out of too much gravity. Wives are given to husbands to cheer them, especially if said husbands be as ours are—all honour to them both—of the graver sort. Be full of interest and admiration for the Scotch beauties, and coax him to take you for a 'wee' tour. Partner and wife can look after the business and house, and see that nothing suffers during the absence of principal and wife."

"Very many thanks to partner and wife," said Annie, drying her eyes, and trying to enter into Maggie's playfulness.

She felt wonderfully better for this talk with her sister. Perhaps Maggie was right. She herself was almost too sympathetic with her husband in his sad moments, and his extremely sensitive disposition made him intensely alive to sorrow as well as to joy.

The next morning, in beautifully bright, early, autumn

weather, Edward and Annie Burnard set out for Edinburgh. There is not very much to be said about the journey. The days of startling adventures and romance in travelling, although not altogether past, have taken exceptional forms other than they had in olden times, and are less likely to present features to attract the reader. The majority of travellers to Scotland accomplish the journey with as cool a head and steady a pulse as they would move about in their own town. Yet there are always some exceptions, and the enthusiasm of Scots returning home after a long tarriance over the border, or of romantic Americans and English crossing that same mystic border-land for the first time, is to be witnessed pretty often. At all events, Annie Burnard, whose young imagination had been first fired by Sir Walter Scott's splendid novels, and whose easily-kindled enthusiasm had been roused as a girl by the glories of Scotch patriotic and religious heroism, grew intensely excited after she had passed Carlisle, where they had broken the journey for the night. And Annie's emotion was surpassed by that of two young people, husband and wife, who were going home to the "auld ingle" for the first time since their marriage and settlement in England, some few years previously.

Their speech, for they were Highland-born, soon lapsed into such excellent and eagerly-spoken Scotch, that Annie found it impossible to understand them, and smilingly looked and listened, as if they had been thorough foreigners.

The first business of the Burnards after reaching Edinburgh, and taking up their quarters, was to seek Miss Lorimer, and to acquaint her with their purposes respecting Jessie. Mr. Burnard did not, at first, intend to disclose Effie's history to that lady, but when she, in warm terms, approved his generosity, he could not feel content to accept what he considered such undeserved praise, and entrusted

her with the leading facts in the career of his unhappy sister.

Miss Lorimer herself was not very different from the Miss Lorimer of Annie's fancy. She was tall and pale and gentle in manner, spite of her energetic way of attending to business matters. A plain countenance was redeemed by its beauty of expression, and she was so genuinely pleased at the change in poor little Jessie's prospects that it was a real comfort to have made her acquaintance.

Her residence was situated on the south side of the city, over which the grand old lion—Arthur's seat—keeps everlasting watch and guard, as he crouches beneath the heavens, in his solemn, still defiance of puny man, and of the cycles of the centuries which march past him and leave him, independent of them all.

From thence Mr. and Mrs. Burnard, with Miss Lorimer, took a carriage and drove to Fraser's Close.

Annie's feelings were so mingled that the drive appeared one of the strangest she had ever known. "The Heart of Mid-Lothian," the stories of the Covenanters, and poor little Jessie's blighted life held disputed possession of her mind, and made her scarcely able to follow the conversation in which her husband and Miss Lorimer were so busily engaged. He must have a hard heart, a dull intellect, and a mean understanding, who does not glow with admiration for the beautiful city of Edinburgh, however little he may be acquainted with its history and its great men. It is a place which, however much admired at a first visit, grows in beauty with further acquaintance, like the face of a lovely woman, to whose charms every new emotion adds an unexpected attraction. But to one who goes there as Annie Burnard went, with reverence for its past and knowledge of its present, it was like the display before her enamoured vision of a boundless picture-gallery, containing the originals

of many a copy she had known and admired; it was like the unlocking of the doors to a library which possessed the rich missals and the manuscripts of priceless literary treasures, in the authors' own hands, of which she had only seen till now abridged copies.

Edward Burnard watched her expressive face, and congratulated himself that he had brought her. Her natural and unaffected delight made him happy, spite of the train of dismal thoughts which he could not wholly escape from.

They were at Fraser's Close, alighting, they sought Mrs. Menzies, and with her proceeded to that room on the topmost flat occupied by little Jessie. The child had just returned from school, and had gone up to have her dinner. When they entered the room she was seated eating her bannocks and drinking her cup of milk very contentedly. A sweet, fair, delicate-looking little girl, with the most beautiful blue eyes Annie thought she had ever seen; attired simply in a tartan stuff frock, her small feet and ankles quite bare, her small hat lying on an old broken chair, she herself seated before her very plain repast—that was the picture engraven on Annie's brain of her first peep at her husband's little niece, the Flower of the Grassmarket.

Directly Jessie saw Mr. Burnard, she slipped very quickly from her chair. Annie noticed that she was very tall for her age and very slight, as she watched her come to him. The child's lovely eyes were lifted sweetly and yet timidly to his, as she said—

"Ay, but I'm blythe ye've come agin, sir."

He stooped and kissed the gentle little face.

"This is my dear wife, Jessie."

The eyes were lifted again, half curiously, half entreatingly, and a smile broke over the face as Annie also kissed her.

"Jessie, my child," said Mr. Burnard, "we have much to

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"Jessie, my child," said Mr. Burnard, "we have much to

say to you, and we want you to come away with us at once, for the rest of the day."

"Will I no go to school agin the day, sir?" she asked; and she looked at Miss Lorimer as she spoke.

"No, not to-day; come now, Jessie," said that lady. "And," she added, turning to Mrs. Menzies, who was the landlady of the house, "we will call and see you about the room to-morrow, and settle matters."

Mrs. Menzies was perfectly agreeable; Miss Lorimer was no stranger to her.

Mr. Burnard was impatient to get the child away. To satisfy Annie's prejudices, who could not be persuaded but that Jessie looked, and must also feel, very miserable without shoes and stockings, the carriage stopped on the way to the hotel, and her quick loving eyes purchased some other things besides the shoes and stockings, which would improve the child's appearance, and make her at once look more what their adopted child should be in dress and appearance.

"She looked so savage with her poor little bare legs and feet," said Annie afterwards, when Edward Burnard smiled at her excess of zeal.

Before they reached the hotel, Miss Lorimer alighted at a friend's house. She had, she said, business which would prevent her staying longer with them that day; but she was very much at their disposal, she politely added, for any help she could render or information she could give during their stay.

"It is best she should get on alone with you," she said to Mr. Burnard in an aside, looking at Jessie the while, who was talking to Annie with much ease and freedom. "I can see the poor little lassie has a home at last."

On arriving at the hotel, Annie Burnard took Jessie to her room and attired her in her new garments, not forgetting

the shoes and stockings. It was the first time that Jessie could remember to have worn them, and she felt very strange, as she said,—

"Ay, Mrs. Burnard, but I canna feel my feet."

Jessie's flaxen hair was carefully combed and brushed by her aunt's kind hands, and she looked a very pretty child with the various improvements made in her costume, the pink ribbon floating on her shoulders giving something of a warm glow to the too pale, too thin face. By the time they descended to the private sitting-room the lunch, which Mr. Burnard had ordered, was set upon the table, and Jessie, spite of her dinner of milk and oat-cakes, was by no means disinclined to eat the wing of chicken and slice of ham which Mr. Burnard put upon her plate. Over her meal the little girl became quite at her ease. After it was done Mr. Burnard took Jessie on his knee as he sat by his wife upon the couch, and he said,—

"Jessie, do you know that your mother has gone away for a long time?"

Her eyes filled, but she did not otherwise answer.

"I have had a letter from your mother, Jessie."

The little Flower of the Grassmarket started and trembled. He drew her nearer to him, and went on :—

"I used to have a dear little sister, Jessie, and she was called Effie. I held her in my arms oh! so often, and loved her so very much. But when she grew up she went away from her home, and I quite lost her, and never expected to hear any more about her. But the other day I had the letter from her to say she had been living in Fraser's Close, and that you, Jessie, were her child. So we have made up our minds, my dear wife and I, that we will take care of you, Jessie, and bring you up, as far as we know how, to be a good girl, to love God and serve Him faithfully."

"I do love Him now," said Jessie; "I do love the Lord Jesus, oh! so much."

"Thank God, my little Jessie," said Mr. Burnard gravely, "that we all three love Him, and desire to praise Him for His great goodness to us, by living pure and honest lives. You will go with us after a short while, Jessie, to a place called Somerleigh, to our pleasant home there."

"To *live* with you and Mrs. Burnard?" queried Jessie joyfully, gradually realizing the agreeable truth.

"Yes, Jessie."

"Ay, I am joyful," said the poor little girl; and from that hour the loving nature of the Flower of the Grassmarket, which had always clung wherever it found even but a little soil of affection to take root in, and had received but slight encouragement through her nine years of life, spread itself more and more around her kind relatives.

"You must not call us Mr. and Mrs. Burnard any more, Jessie, but uncle and aunt."

"Are ye really my verra own auntie?" she asked, turning to Annie Burnard.

"Your verra own, Jessie," repeated Annie, smiling.

There were many pleasures in store for Jessie. Each day endeared the winning, loving child to her uncle and aunt, and they were delighted to find how much her innocent purity of heart and gentleness of manner had preserved her uncontaminated by the miserable associations that had surrounded her.

On the first Sabbath Annie put Jessie through a short impromptu catechism, and was exceedingly surprised to find that this neglected little one would bear favourable comparison with many a child who had been carefully trained.

"How is it, Jessie?" she asked, "that you know so much Bible history, and so many sweet truths about our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?"

"Ay, auntie," she replied, "dinna ye ken I hae had mony a teacher? Ye mind I was in the hospital a lang, lang time, where dear Nursie McAlpine taught me first o' a'. An' sin' I hae learned frae Miss Lorimer—and she's a real bonnie teacher, she just kens a' things—and auld Biddy Macarthy—ye dinna ken auld Biddy, auntie?"

"Yes, I have heard a little about her, Jessie, but you shall tell me all some day."

"Auld Biddy was my teacher, too, auntie; but the best o' them a' was my ain Bible. Dinna ye remember how ye sent me a Bible, auntie?"

This book, carefully wrapped up, had been one of the very few possessions which Jessie had to bring from Fraser's Close; the well-kept, much-used Bible, whose pages she had first turned over without being able to read them in those earlier days at the hospital, but which, since Nurse McAlpine had taught her to read, had been the constant companion and best instructor of the lonely child.

It was very delightful to Edward and Annie Burnard to mark the improvement in the child's appearance, which took place during her pleasant holiday with them. They decided that she must not leave Scotland without seeing and learning to admire some of its many beauties, and they took her with them when they explored the interesting objects in the city. She wandered with them in delighted glee when they traversed the romantic loveliness of fair Hawthornden, its exquisite ruins and wondrous Bruce-haunted caves. She beheld the venerable castle of Roslin, saw the delicate architectural gem, Roslin Chapel, with its marvellously sculptured 'Prentice pillar, and heard the guide relate the tragic story connected therewith. And Annie told her of the unfortunate Mary Queen of Scots, as they roamed beneath the massive and magnificent old ruin of Linlithgow Palace where that princess was born.

"Of all the palaces so fair
Built for the royal dwelling,
In Scotland far beyond compare
Linlithgow is excelling."

Annie repeated Scott's lines, and then remarked to her husband what a striking background the unflinching strength of its walls and the grandeur of its ornamented portions must have been to the gay scenes enacted there, scenes that fade away in the dazzling beauty and tragic fate of the lovely girl who sojourned within it in her childhood.

The calm fairness of the scene below the palace walls, the bright waters of the loch, the picturesque little islands which stud its waters, the merry children noisy at their play in the noble park on which the palace stands, made an abiding picture in Jessie's memory, young as she was, no less than in her aunt's.

A trip to the Trossachs, Loch Katrine, and Loch Lomond, was in Mr. Burnard's programme, and Annie was busy recalling passages from the "Lady of the Lake," which she had learned at school. Nobody can be disappointed with that lovely scenery; the emerald beauty of the Trossachs, a "living green," and of the mountains and islands which surround and rest on Loch Katrine, the rougher grandeur of Loch Lomond and its grand old mountain, and the romantic ride between the two lakes, over the steep wild barren moorland region, formerly the territory of the formidable Rob Roy. We might linger over all, and yet do them but meagre justice.

St. Mungo's City, more commonly known as Glasgow, occupied no little of Annie's attention. Here her beloved husband had spent several years of early manhood; and some parts of the city, from his frequent description, were familiar to her imagination. She saw a likeness between Somerleigh and Glasgow; there were the same devotion to

business in its streets, and appearance of doing much of that "business in great waters," besides which there was a link remaining in both cities of a large West India trade, albeit Glasgow was so much the larger, wider, finer city of the two.

Before the little Flower of the Grassmarket could leave her native city, there were several leave-takings to be gone through, limited as was the child's acquaintance. She was claimed for two days at the hospital, where all her old friends, not forgetting Tommy, were rejoiced at her good fortune. Her aunt took her on both these visits, and made all the children very happy by a well-chosen selection of toys, fruits, and sweets; while to Nurse McAlpine Jessie carried a handsome picture-Bible to help her in her Sunday work with the children. Mrs. Menzies, to whom Mr. Burnard's generous payment for her care of Jessie had been extremely welcome, carried her off for one day, during which the juvenile and adult population of the Grassmarket must look their last, for many a long day, at their blooming floweret.

Yet another visit was bespoken by Miss Lorimer, who requested also the favour of Mr. and Mrs. Burnard's company. There were two graves in the great city besides, to which Jessie said adieu, and over which she shed many tears, the grave of the old Irishwoman Biddy Macarthy, and that of the little Scotch lad, "her bonnie dearie Aleck," who died in the hospital. And she took away with her the little china shepherd that "auld Biddy" had given her, to find a place in her new home.

Miss Lorimer had invited her niece, Agnes Lorimer, a child of about Jessie's own age, to play with her. Agnes had now and then seen Jessie at her aunt's, or in the Sunday-school, but Jessie's appearance was a good deal altered since then, for Annie Burnard had of course attired

the little girl in a manner befiting her present position and prospects. Her soft white cashmere dress, well made, and trimmed with black velvet, and her broad crimson sash, were in keeping with the gentle face, the blue eyes, and the flaxen hair.

While the two children played in the garden before tea, the conversation amongst their elders within turned upon Sunday-schools. For Sunday-school teachers, enthusiastic in their work, whenever they may happen to meet, find they have a subject in common. The first topic was the use of catechisms in schools. Miss Lorimer, being a thorough Presbyterian, had full faith in the catechism, and hence ensued an interesting argument.

"There is little doubt in my mind," said Miss Lorimer, "that a child who learns a catechism has his faith epitomized, and his mind strengthened, in a way which no other teaching can ensure."

"I cannot agree with you," said Annie; "catechisms are at best but man's exposition of what he believes to be the laws of God, and the doctrines of Jesus Christ. Why not then teach these straight from the Bible, and from that alone? Surely it is so much the simplest and safest course."

"But, remember," said Miss Lorimer, "that teachers who teach as they believe, straight from the Bible, will yet naturally and almost unavoidably, give the colouring of their own views to their lessons just as much, and probably more (granting that it has been done at all) than it has been done in the Assembly's Catechism, by the good men who prepared it. And then the Catechism is not the work of one man, or two, but of a number of good men, all anxious for the extension of God's truth, and the instruction of the dear children."

"Yet of good men who are all agreed beforehand, Miss

Lorimer, in the main, both on doctrine and in opinion," said Mr. Burnard.

"I think myself," said Miss Lorimer, "that much of the fickle, uncertain, slipshod religion of England is to be attributed to her want of teaching a catechism more generally."

"But the Church of England *does* teach the catechism in day-schools and Sunday-schools, and in schools of all classes of children, from their National Schools for the poor upwards. Yet where can be found greater diversity of opinion in one religious community than amongst the members of the Church of England?" questioned Mr. Burnard.

"Do you think we ought to take our religious teaching on faith without question?" said Annie; "ought we not to 'prove all things, and hold fast that which is good'?"

"Of course," replied Miss Lorimer; "but when those who are greater and better than we are have proved the truth, why should we not accept their conclusions instead of going over the ground again?"

"But is not that setting the authority of the Church too high, and doing away with individual judgment?" queried Mr. Burnard.

"My chief objection to catechisms, whether of the Scotch or English Churches," said Annie, "is the preponderance of doctrine over love in them. Surely, if children are to be won at all it must be by love, and not by dry, abstract reasoning, nor by terror. For my own part I have a great scruple against some of the hymns in common use in our schools for the same reason. You could never love a father who was always reminding you of the punishments he had in store for you. The best earthly fathers rule by love; the highest kind of obedience springs from the pain that the loving child feels when he has grieved so dear a parent. And beyond all earthly love is the tenderness of God to

His children. It cannot be His will that we should drag the children before Him by threats of punishment and of torture if they stay away. Christ's teaching had but little about penalty in it, it was mostly an invitation to 'come, taste, and see how good the Lord is.'"

"Yet you must admit, Mrs. Burnard," said Miss Lorimer, "that some very solemn and awful sentences of condemnation are scattered throughout Christ's teachings."

"Yes, to the wilfully proud and perversely disobedient, who set themselves in array against God."

"And have you not found in your experience that there are even children who do so?"

"Only in a very limited degree," replied Annie; "I don't know that I ever met with a child whom the story of Christ's love has not moved effectually sooner or later more than all knowledge of the punishments prepared for the wicked."

The entrance of the tea service, and of the children, put an end to the discussion.

"Aunt Isabel," said Agnes Lorimer, "we are having such fun, and we are going to play again if we may after tea. We are a Band of Hope, and we will have a meeting; and would you like to come? Would *you*, Mrs. Burnard?" she asked, coming to Annie, and looking up artlessly in her face.

"Who is to be your speaker," asked Annie, playfully.

"Oh! I don't know which of us," said Agnes.

"Are Bands of Hope common in England in connection with your Sunday-schools?" asked Miss Lorimer.

Annie glanced at her husband as she said, "Edward, do you know? I don't think I have paid enough attention to the matter to be able to give an answer."

"Scarcely common, except in some districts, I think," said Mr. Burnard; "certainly not by any means general."

"Perhaps the Band of Hope movement is not one in which you take an interest?"

"I hope I do feel an interest in anything which can do children good," said Annie; "but we have not thought of Bands of Hope in connection with Sunday-school work."

"You do not sympathize with the Temperance movement at all, perchance?" queried Miss Lorimer.

"Just to this extent," replied Mr. Burnard, "we are extremely temperate ourselves, and we have never provided any kind of intoxicating drink on any occasion when we have invited our scholars; but we have not gone any further than this, nor am I sure that I shall ever see it my duty to go further."

"May I ask," said Miss Lorimer, "*why* you don't give them drink? I conclude that you not unfrequently place other luxuries before them."

"Oh, yes," said Annie Burnard; "we like to give them an abundance of other things to show that it is not want of good-will on our part that wine and beer are not included."

"You have not answered Miss Lorimer, Annie," said Mr. Burnard. "It is doubtless because we feel there is a danger in these beverages. I have seen many painful exhibitions even at Sunday-school treats of the consequences of too free an indulgence in liquor, therefore I determined not to have anything of that kind to answer for."

Miss Lorimer did not pursue the subject further until after tea was over, and the children had gone to play again, having secured the promise of Elspie, Miss Lorimer's servant, that she would very soon join them and come to their meeting.

"The Band of Hope appears to me a necessary appendage of the Sunday-school," Miss Lorimer then said. "The statistics concerning the number of young people just

at the most critical period of their lives, who abandon themselves to dissolute habits, after a childhood spent Sabbath by Sabbath in the Sunday-school, should certainly cause us to inquire into the cause. And when such young people are questioned by city missionaries and by prison chaplains as to the reason of their degradation, the cry is almost unanimous, 'the drink;' drink and bad company are robbing the Sabbath-schools of Great Britain of hundreds and thousands of adult scholars. If only their Sabbath-school teacher were also almost invariably their Band of Hope teacher, and threw the whole weight of his or her influence upon the side of total abstinence, I am certain the results would be widely different. Then, again, the Band of Hope and the Sabbath-school act and react upon each other, and give us, what I often hear people wishing for, an additional hold upon the children, a further insight into their characters, and a particular point of sympathy with the parents."

"True," said Mr. Burnard; "further knowledge of our children is very desirable."

"I conclude," continued Miss Lorimer, "that we are all of us sufficiently acquainted with the properties of strong drink to be aware that, as you said just now, Mr. Burnard, 'there is a certain degree of *danger* in its use.' If our children are the offspring of sober parents, there may yet be in their own constitutions a tendency to excitement or derangement of the nervous system. If they are the children of those who have been addicted to drink, there is very likely in them an inherited craving for stimulants. These are plain facts which the doctors have ably made known to us of late, and which teetotalers began to understand more than thirty years ago."

"You think," said Annie, "we all ought to make the sacrifice for the sake of our influence? That is what my

brother-in-law thinks. He is a most uncompromising teetotaler."

"Excuse me, Mrs. Burnard," said Miss Lorimer, smiling, "I cannot call it *a sacrifice* on my part to abstain from what I am sure poisons me in exact proportion to the quantity I swallow. I am a teetotaller in simple obedience to the laws of health, and should be, independently of all other obligations and considerations. To abstain is only a real sacrifice when the taste for alcoholic liquors has grown to such a height that it is not only a sacrifice but a duty to give them up."

"Yet people, even teetotallers, constantly talk of its being a sacrifice, and after all, I think it would be a little one to myself to give up my glass of wine when I know it would refresh me."

"I think it is a very large word to use for a small matter," said Miss Lorimer, laughing—a laugh in which both Edward and Annie Burnard heartily joined.

"But when we consider the subject in regard to our children," continued Miss Lorimer; "when we know that the sin of excess in this particular is one of those sins to which they are most constantly liable through the prevailing habits of society, then there is but little choice for us, our duty is so plain."

"Do not the ordinary Bands of Hope in connection with the Temperance Societies embrace our children in their ranks?" said Annie.

"Of course they do reach many of them, because the apathy of the Church of God allowed such societies to be almost the only workers in this field. But when there is the Sunday-school already organized, whose duty it is to adopt every collateral agency for the benefit of the children; when, on the other hand, strong drink neutralizes the work of the Sunday-school more than any earthly influence with

which we have the power to grapple, does it not seem absurd, if it were not so sad, that we stand aloof from forming Bands of Hope within our Sunday-schools? Forgive me," said Miss Lorimer, after a pause, "I have made quite a long speech, and a warm speech for a parlour, but I do feel so strongly on this matter, and the urgency of the case is so imperative; and you know when Scotch fire is once kindled, though it takes a long time to kindle, it is a difficult matter to put it out again."

"Words that spring from earnest love to Christ, and to the lambs of His flock, need no apology, dear Miss Lorimer," said Annie Burnard. "Believe me, you have set me thinking very seriously on this subject, and I shall not rest, I hope, until I discover and do my duty."

"Nor shall I," said Mr. Burnard; "but I am by no means sanguine that Annie and I, even if we were so disposed, could start a Band of Hope in Taylor Street Sunday-school. Our officers would look very grave, our dear minister would shake his head, and they would all agree that the grace of God implanted in the children's hearts would prevent their ever indulging in the sin of drunkenness.

"But when we consider that great and good men to whom the Churches looked up with reverence, and who certainly at one time had the grace of God in their hearts, have fallen woefully through strong drink, how shall we ever know when children have sufficiently received the grace of God to keep them from falling too? The physical evil, drunkenness, requires, by reason of the insidious nature of the drink which produces it, a strong physical remedy—total abstinence from intoxicating, that is, poisonous, drink."

"Are you coming, Aunt Isabel?"

Two little heads peeped in together as the door opened.

"Run away, Agnes, we are coming presently. Shall we see what they are doing, Mrs. Burnard?" said Miss Lorimer.

"Oh! I should like to."

"Before we dismiss this subject, may I say that I have earnestly endeavoured to instil into your little Jessie's mind the duty of total abstinence," said Miss Lorimer; "and may I hope that she will never be *permitted—tempted*, I am sure she will not be—to break her pledge, of which she fully understands the serious nature?"

"Not if we can help it, Miss Lorimer," said Mr. Burnard, gravely.

In the old schoolroom of the house, now devoted to the play and recreation of Miss Lorimer's nephews and nieces, they found Elspie, and Janet the cook, and a number of dolls seated on the old school forms, arranged after the manner of a public meeting, with Jessie Burnard in the seat of honour as chairman, and Agnes Lorimer, on her right, the speaker of the evening. Miss Lorimer and her guests took the front seats, much to the discomposure of the gravity of both orator and chairman; indeed, Jessie broke down utterly in her opening remarks, and was obliged, like other chairmen have occasionally been heard to do, to repeat herself in a rather ludicrous fashion. Her mutilated eloquence was quite eclipsed by Agnes, who, after one merry outburst of laughter, and with great blushing of face, managed to say a few temperance truths with much vivacity and point.

The day after this pleasant visit the little Flower of the Grassmarket was speeding away in the train from the land of her birth, and from her beautiful native city, to take root in unknown, untried England.

CHAPTER XX.

FRANK IN TROUBLE.

MR. VINE had two small monetary losses, which annoyed him greatly. He said again and again, and it was quite true,—

"It isn't the money I care for, Stapleton; it is having those boys about, and not knowing who to suspect or what to think. I might have doubted the evidence of my own books with regard to the five shillings, but then the ten shillings was in the till that very morning before I missed it."

"And you are sure you did not take it out again?" said Mr. Stapleton.

"Of course I am sure," said Mr. Vine, looking very worried, and very red with the worry; "I tell you, I did nothing but add to it. I knew to a farthing the history of that day's account, and that ten shillings has gone like the two half-crowns before it."

"The only thing you can do is to wait," said his assistant, who had strong suspicions of "Monkey," arising from his not unnatural dislike of mischievous Frank Bellman. "Monkey," from the fact of his residing in the house, heard a rumour of the missing money, and never rested till from Mrs. Vine and Sally he had managed to learn the whole story. Mrs. Vine took a very gloomy view of the matter. She saw in it the foreshadowing of that dismal future, when, for lack of "a prop," she and "her three helpless little girls" would be "cast adrift upon the wide ocean of life." It never occurred to her that a "prop" in an ocean, unless it took the shape of an anchor, was not likely to prevent drifting.

"If money went," as she very justly observed, "at the rate of fifteen shillings per week, there was no telling how long it would take to get to the end."

Whether with *less* reliable data than the fifteen shillings Mrs. Vine *would* have been able to make the calculation of its speed, is, however, doubtful, since with it she was at so great a loss.

The Sunday on which Mrs. Burnard took her class again after her absence in Scotland, was also the Sunday after the money had been missed. Frank Drew brought his missionary card, which he had worked very hard to finish filling during her absence. While his mother and little sister had been staying at Rose Villa, Frank and his father had been thrown more closely together. Drew's character was deepening in seriousness as the years rolled on, and he encouraged Frank to talk to him on religious subjects, and of what he learnt at the Sunday-school. And Frank on his part made himself very useful during his mother's absence, preparing the meals and keeping the house straight, as his mother had taught him to do when he was a very little fellow, so that some of the neighbours declared Frank was as handy as a girl. Frank told his father about his missionary work and his card, and how he wanted to fill it before Mrs. Burnard's return.

"Well," said Drew, "you've been a good boy, Frank, and you shall have something from me on Saturday. I don't see that I do enough for the cause of the Lord. I thought little of spending my shillings at the 'Harp,' but now that I'm playing another tune, I'm less free with my money. To be sure it is always right to look after home first, for I understand it well now that a man who doesn't do his duty to home folks, is, as the Bible says, 'worse than an infidel.' But I shan't be the poorer if I help to send the Gospel to the heathen, according to my means."

Frank thanked his father, and hoped for a shilling from him, but what was his pleasure and surprise when on the Saturday after their conversation he handed him five shillings, and said,—

"There, Frank, you shall have that every year that I'm spared to work for it. I worked overtime for that, and I'll do it regular as the years come round. Put down the date, Frank, and mind me when I gave it to you as the time comes again. And, Frank, it isn't for me to make a boast of any matter like this, which I may be able to do, so I won't sign my name, but just put N. W. for the last letters of John Drew, and nobody but you and me need be any the wiser."

Frank had another unexpected addition to his card. He was going along with a heavy basketful of groceries when an old gentleman met him.

"Are you called Frank Drew?" said he.

"Yes, sir."

"And are you the boy who takes a very great interest in foreign mission work connected with the Taylor Street Sunday-school?"

Frank's face naturally glowed with pleasure, and before he could answer, the old gentleman went on,—

"Ah! I see you are, it is all right; have you the card now?"

Frank had. He generally kept it in his waistcoat pocket. He had several donors amongst the servants, and even amongst the families to whose houses he carried Mr. Vine's groceries. So he pulled it out of his pocket, and from the envelope in which he kept it clean, and handed it to the old gentleman.

"Very good," he said, as he took out his gold pencil case, and wrote upon it, and then returned it to Frank with half a sovereign. Frank was delighted; he seldom, indeed,

received so much in one sum as ten shillings, and without any trouble on his part too. He thanked the old gentleman repeatedly with beaming eyes, but he only smiled and said, "Good boy, good boy," and passed on. And when Frank, after he had gone, looked to see his name on the card, he found only the four letters put as if they were initials, A.N.O.N.

Frank set out for school with a happy heart to meet his beloved teacher. Annie Burnard had come back refreshed and strengthened for her work by her ramble amongst the sparkling silver lochs and purple heather-clad hills of bonnie Scotland. She was ready to tell her boys something about her tour, for all that profited her was made to reflect good on her class. And after the lesson was over, and the pleasant talk had followed, Frank Drew gave her his well-filled card, and Annie congratulated him on the success he had had.

"Five shillings, ten shillings; why, Frank, you have been getting it in large sums this time," she observed.

"Monkey's" ears were sharp to hear, and "Monkey" repeated to himself, "Five shillings, ten shillings."

"Where did you get all that money from, Drew? Who gave it to him, teacher?" he asked.

"Anon," said Annie, merrily, "and N.W."

"Who's Anon?" asked "Monkey."

"It means anonymous—that is, the person preferred not to tell his name," replied Annie.

"Monkey" grinned maliciously. He always spent Sunday at home, but he did not forget to spread the news next morning at Mr. Vine's that Frank's missionary card was already full, and that he had two donations *without* the names of the givers, one for the sum of five shillings, and the other for ten shillings.

"Wasn't it queer, Sally?" he said to the servant-girl,

"that one of those sums was five shillings and the other ten shillings?"

"What do you mean, Master Bellman?" asked Sally.

"Oh, nothing! only 'twas curious, because you know Mrs. Vine lost five shillings and ten shillings, and Frank Drew as good as found it."

Of course Sally repeated this to her mistress, and Mrs. Vine being very easily satisfied of a person's guilt, thought it proved beyond a question who the individual was who had taken the money. Mrs. Vine forthwith repeated it to her husband, who said, in answer, rather hastily,—

"Oh! nonsense, my dear, the two things have no connection whatever."

But Mr. Vine began to doubt Frank Drew more than he had ever thought of doing before. During the day he mentioned the matter to Mr. Stapleton, who said frankly, "It was a queer thing without doubt; but that if a man's character, or a boy's character either, was to be taken away because of a curious coincidence like that, when they had not been known to take the value of a pin that did not belong to them for many years, the most honest lad in the world, which he believed Frank Drew to be, would not be safe from suspicion."

Mr. Vine determined to mark some money, being advised thereto by Mrs. Vine, who had in all her experience never known marked money fail to discover the thief.

The following Saturday Frank Drew received his wages as usual and went home. He was sitting at supper with his parents, when, after a knock at the door, which was answered by his mother's saying, "Come in," for she thought it was one of her neighbours, Mr. Stapleton entered.

"Frank, Mr. Vine wants you," he said, before Frank had time to make any inquiry.

"Wants me, Mr. Stapleton! what ever for, please?"

Frank was tired with a hard day's tramping about, for Saturday is always a busy day at a grocer's; and he was naturally reluctant to leave the nice supper of well-cooked tripe and onions, of which he was very fond, and which was the regular Saturday evening treat of his good mother, when her boy came home fatigued by his week's work.

"There's been a mistake about something, Frank, and Mr. Vine won't be satisfied unless you come at once."

"Go, by all means," said his father; "mother 'll keep it hot for you;" and Frank rose from his unfinished meal.

Mr. Stapleton had come for Frank out of kindness, to prevent any more unpleasant messenger being sent for him.

"Frank Drew!" said he, as if introducing him, as they reached Mr. Vine's, and he ushered him into the shop.

To Frank's great surprise he found there assembled the following persons: a policeman, waiting for business; Mr. Vine, looking very worried and miserable; Mrs. Vine, looking a shade less miserable than usual—indeed, for her, considerably triumphant and jubilant, for had she not declared that "marked money always discovered the thief"? At her side, clinging to her mother in a sense of fright and dread, was the eldest of the three "helpless little girls" in want of "a prop," and therefore, naturally, a flabby-looking child, whose paleness, however, might also be accounted for by the lateness of the hour, for it was nearly ten o'clock. Besides these, "Monkey," perched upon a counter, gazed stupidly, with blinking eyes, at the whole scene; and Sally peeped at the door that led into the house, apron in hand, ready to be applied to mouth or eyes, according as circumstances waxed ludicrous or pathetic.

"Frank Drew," said Mr. Vine, as nervously as a schoolboy in imminent danger of a whipping, and looking much more confused than his errand-boy, when Frank's honest face was upturned to his.

"Yes, sir."

"There have been several money losses, Frank, lately, and I have to-day missed a sovereign. I am obliged to sift the matter, and you, amongst others, must be examined."

"Yes, sir; of course, sir."

Frank acceded at once to the propriety of this. It was very unpleasant, he thought, but he had no fear.

"Have you taken any money out of your pocket, and given to your mother since you went home? I quite expect you have," said Mrs. Vine.

"Yes, ma'am, I nearly always give her my ten shillings at once when I go home."

Frank's wages had been lately raised to ten shillings a week because of his reliability, steadiness, and industry. Mr. Vine believed it economical to obtain a good article of any kind, even if he paid a high price for it. He was not by any means one of your "penny wise, pound foolish" men of business.

"Had you any other money, Frank?" asked Mr. Vine.

"Yes, sir: I think I have a sixpence and a few pence about me."

"Turn out your pockets," said the policeman, speaking for the first time since Frank had entered.

Frank obeyed readily. They contained the *omnium gatherum* that boys' pockets generally are found to contain: knife, twine, bits of wood and stone (of no value whatever except to the owner), a lump of chalk, a blacklead pencil, some pence loose, and the sixpence in a leather purse a good deal worn, none of whose folds revealed, though very minutely examined, anything more than the sixpence. Frank began to congratulate himself that it was all over, when the policeman said,—

"Empty your jacket pockets too."

"Why, I never put anything in them unless 'tis a scarf

in cold weather, or a book, or my pocket-handkerchief." And out came the red spotted handkerchief in his hand as he spoke, and then he put his hand in again to turn the pocket itself inside out. But what was it that, as he did so, drove the smile from his lips and the colour from his cheeks?

"Here *is* some money," he said, in a faltering voice; "but I didn't know it was there;" and he drew out, not the odd halfpenny or stray sixpenny-bit, that he hoped it might be even as he spoke, but a golden sovereign, which seemed to burn his fingers and lacerate his heart as he touched its hard rough rim.

"Ha!" exclaimed Mrs. Vine, drawing a very deep breath indeed; "one need to be accustomed to such ones, to know how to go to work," and she glanced with intense approval at the policeman.

"Monkey's" eyes twinkled, and he gave a whistle under his breath. Sally exclaimed emphatically,—

"Bless me! I never: no, I never did." But it was difficult to conjecture as to what circumstance in the damsel's life this asseveration had reference.

Little Miss Vine heaved a deep, unchildlike sigh.

But Frank had no ears, no eyes, save for his master, the policeman, and Mr. Stapleton, who were all gathered together to examine the sovereign, which gleamed and shone in Mr. Vine's fingers as he stood under the gaslight and turned it nervously around.

"Yes, it is there, there can be no doubt. A *V* as plain as daylight," exclaimed the policeman.

"Look here, youngster," he said, turning to Frank, "it is my duty to take you into custody on the charge of having robbed your master."

"Stop, stop, if you please!" said Mr. Vine, hastily, with extreme trepidation in every word and gesture; "if he will

only confess his fault I am prepared to condone the offence to myself. I have no desire to prosecute him, if he will only confess."

"I cannot confess what I have not done," said Frank Drew, his face as white as his master's was red. "I have not taken that money."

"Not taken—but, Frank—why 'twas in your pocket, my boy. Come, do say you're sorry."

Poor Mr. Vine was almost crying in his anxiety.

"How can you want to make him tell a story, Richard?" said his wife, sternly. "He *isn't* sorry, and it's my opinion he is a thorough young thief, and could tell all about the five shillings and ten shillings too, if he was made to."

"Come, Frank, come; I give you another chance," said Mr. Vine. "You know it was marked, so we must be right; there can be no mistake about it."

Mr. Stapleton made no remark, but narrowly watched both boys, Frank Drew and Frank Bellman, all through the prolonged interview.

"If I had been so wicked as to take the sovereign, sir," said Frank, "I would, I hope, confess it. I do not say it is not yours; you marked it and must know; but I do say that I do not know how it came into my jacket pocket."

"If you want to hush it up, better fetch his father, sir," said the policeman; "he'll make the young rogue confess it, for all he's such a stubborn young donkey."

Mr. Stapleton volunteered to go for Drew, but before he had gone many yards he met Frank's father coming to inquire what had detained his son. The policeman formed his own conjecture immediately—that father and son were accomplices in the business.

"John Drew," said Mr. Vine, shaking hands with him as he entered, "I am grieved beyond expression to have to suspect your son of robbing me."

"My son of *robbing* you, sir?" repeated Drew, with surprise in every word, as if he could not at once comprehend the dreadful suggestion. "What ever ground can you have of accusing him of such a thing?"

"Don't be high and mighty," said the policeman; "the dodge won't take—the money's already found on the young cove."

Drew looked round at each face, as if begging for a denial of this statement, but, of course, no one could so relieve his mind.

"Yes, father, a sovereign marked with a *V* by Mr. Vine has been found on me, in my jacket pocket, where I never thought of putting money at all. How it came there I know as much as you do, father, and no more."

"Perhaps not," said the policeman, ironically.

"I have promised him to forgive him, Drew, if he will only confess it," said Mr. Vine.

"But I dare not tell a lie, even to save myself from prison," said Frank, great tears at last welling up from his full heart into his eyes, which so fearlessly met the eyes of all. Indeed, when you looked at the shrinking, nervous, red, and flurried Mr. Vine, he appeared by far the most guilty person present.

"Frank," said Drew, laying his large rough hand on the boy's shoulder, and gazing into his face with a yearning tenderness that redeemed the rough, somewhat uncouth features of the man, and made him beautiful, "I've sinned deep, my boy, though I never was tempted to be dishonest. You'll never get a taunt from your father, Frank, even if the devil has so far led you wrong as for you to take your master's money. But don't be ashamed to confess. The marked money is found in your pocket; it looks bad, lad. Say you are sorry, resolve to turn over a new leaf, and work it out by running your master's errands two weeks without

wages. Then begin again clear, my son, and we'll thank God you had such a good master when temptation seized you—a master that wanted to give a lad another chance, and wasn't hard to him."

"Not half hard enough," said Mrs. Vine.

Drew looked at her, and then waited for Frank to respond to his appeal.

"Master,—father," said Frank, raising his eyes alternately to those whom he addressed, "did I ever tell either of you a lie?"

"No," said Mr. Vine; "I never until now knew you to do so."

"Never, my boy," said Drew.

"Then will you not believe me now?" asked Frank, entreatingly. "I cannot say I took that sovereign, because I never did take it; I never thought of such a thing. How am I to confess to being a thief when I never took a penny that wasn't my own?"

"I have nothing more to say, Frank. It's all a mystery, but I believe you," said his father.

"I don't know what to do, what to believe, nor what to think," said poor Mr. Vine.

"You are bound to give him in charge, sir, and to prosecute. A pack of lies only makes the thing worse," said the policeman, rather surlily. He thought the grocer foolishly timid and lenient. "It's no wonder there's a generation of young vagabonds to be looked after, with such easy-going masters as there are now-a-days," thought P.C. Grenville, 143.

"Why don't you do as the worthy policeman says, Richard? we shall be robbed out of house and home at this rate," remarked Mrs. Vine, bitterly, and the helpless little daughter heaved another of her deep, unchildlike sighs.

"'Master,—father,' said Frank, raising his eyes alternately to those whom he addressed, 'did I ever tell either of you a lie?'" *Page 222.*

"I give him in charge, policeman," said Mr. Vine slowly, as if each of the words were a nauseous pill, to be swallowed with disgust.

P.C. 143 drew near Frank.

"Oh, mother!" cried the poor boy then. "It will break my mother's heart. Oh, father! go home and comfort mother!"

Drew kissed his boy with tears in his own eyes, as the policeman took him by the arm and led him out of the shop.

"We shall never believe you guilty, my son," he said, "never, and we'll do all we can for you. There's lawyers to be had who can help out the truth, I reckon, as well as those that do it the other way, and I'll take care you shall have one to speak for you. Cheer up, my boy, there's been good folks sent to prison before to-day."

Drew's brave words were in curious, touching contrast with the great sobs that almost choked their utterance.

"Do go home to mother, father, she'll be so dreadfully anxious by this time; and give her my *dear* love, father, and say I'm neither a liar nor a thief, whatever others may think. Oh! I wish I could have said good-bye to her. Tell her I can feel clear before God, come what may."

So the company gathered in Mr. Vine's shop dispersed. Drew went back with the grievous news to his wife. Frank proceeded to the lock-up, escorted by the policeman, and accompanied by Mr. Stapleton, who had determined to see for himself what kind of lodgment Frank would have for the night; and Mr. and Mrs. Vine, with the eldest of the trio of helpless daughters, adjourned to the supper-table in the sitting-room, where Mr. Vine pretended to eat some bread and cheese, but altogether failed in the performance, though Mrs. Vine and the little daughter and the apprentice "Monkey" appeared to enjoy with melancholy satisfaction the

piece of cold beefsteak pie of which they chose to partake. Sally retired to the kitchen to meditate on the punishment of theft, and to wonder if Frank Drew would have a picture in the *Police News.*

All but the master of the house had, however, gone to bed when Mr. Stapleton returned.

"Well," said Mr. Vine, "how did you leave the poor fellow?"

"Oh, not very badly off for a lock-up. The sergeant has taken him in his own room. He's as comfortable as a fellow can be who's altogether in the wrong place."

Mr. Vine shook his head dismally, and wished his assistant "good night."

CHAPTER XXI.

BEFORE THE MAGISTRATES.

A SUNDAY at the lock-up, and a Monday in the magistrate's court. The lock-up wasn't at all the place in which Frank would have chosen to spend a Sunday, and yet, as Mr. Stapleton had assured Mr. Vine, he was by no means harshly treated, but granted much indulgence. The boy was not in on suspicion of any very deadly, or grave, or disgusting offence, and the sergeant in charge, a good-tempered, kind-hearted man, with a large family of his own of boys and girls, one of whom was just Frank's age, was by no means inclined to add to the lad's distress by his harshness. Frank had a mattress and a couple of blankets on the floor of a small room leading out of the dismal office, where the sergeant sat and made the entries of all the charges brought against the various prisoners who entered. But Frank could not have slept that miserable night had he been on a bed of down, and he lay restlessly tossing to and fro, and wondering how it would all end, and what his parents were doing, and whether his mother was keeping watch with him through those dark, dreary hours—as indeed she was, poor woman, with the added misery of fancying her child was even now probably thrown in amongst drunkards and swearers, who would make night hideous with their sin.

"What would Mrs. Burnard say?" thought Frank. Oh! how he wished he could see her gentle face. And Mr. Duncan, would he come to him in his distress? Never had his friends seemed to him so invaluable as now that he was so suddenly and painfully removed from them all: the

Sunday-school; the happy hours he had spent there for so many years, the pride he had taken only last Sunday in presenting his full missionary-card to his dearly-loved teacher. And this Sunday afternoon he would be absent, and "Monkey" would report the cause. "Monkey!" As with a sudden flash Frank guessed that Frank Bellman was the cause of all his misery, and then almost immediately blamed himself for his suspicions. "Monkey" might play many a mean trick, he thought, but he would not let his mischief-making go so far as this. And remembering all the many lessons he had learnt from the Bible against detraction and false judgments, he bravely determined, like a Christian boy, to put the thought of "Monkey" from him as much as possible.

Several times he was disturbed by the terrible noise made by drunken men and women, who were brought into the sergeant's room on that Saturday night, and conveyed away to the cells, often with much uproar, after their names had been entered by the sergeant on the charge list. Frank had no idea till now of the wretchedness that exists, and the miserable amount of sin, whose perpetrators are locked up and punished week after week in a long, sad, ever-extending procession of sorrow and infamy. And he learnt from his new friend the sergeant that strong drink is the cause of the greatest part of this procession.

If Frank had not been innocent himself, he thought that night would not have been bearable to him. When he awoke next day it was at the call of the police officer, who informed him that his father and mother had come to see him. It was an unspeakable relief to Mrs. Drew to find that her boy was not, as she expressed it, "taking unconscious lessons in evil through bad companionship;" and though her poor eyelids were swollen and red with her "night of weeping," and told how much she had endured

for her son's sake, yet her mother's heart, brave and true, now tried hard to cheer him with promises of their aid to the very uttermost on his behalf. They were going next, she said, to Rose Villa, to consult Mr. and Mrs. Burnard as to whom they should employ in his defence on the morrow. Their visit inspired Frank with some hope, and enabled him to be rather more composed throughout the day. He sat listening to the sweet bells, as their music floated from church tower and steeple through the open window of the outer room, trying hard to feel forgiving to all men and trustful in his God. The sergeant was relieved early in the day by another officer, who treated Frank with less cordiality, but very civilly; and as he happily found a Bible in the small ante-room, he read the Sunday-school lesson, and found the references, and tried to make the day profitable to his soul. In the afternoon he had three more visitors.

"Oh! how kind of you, Mrs. Burnard and Mr. Duncan!" he said, grasping the hands they held out to him, and looking first into the gentle face of Annie, so kindly turned to his own, and then into the honest, true countenance of his still older friend.

"My poor Frank!" said Annie. "I knew you would want to see me and to know from my own lips how fully I trust you. I cannot tell how far this trial may be permitted to go, but even if you are found guilty by your fellow-men, Frank, I shall believe you innocent. I have known you too long and too well to doubt you; and better still, dear boy, God judgeth 'not according to the appearance,' 'for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.'"

"Your friends have not forsaken you, you see, Frank," said Mr. Burnard, kindly shaking him by the hand. "This is a mysterious business, but I hope and believe we shall be able to clear it up. I have been to see Mr. Vine, and

he lost other sums, and suspects you of having taken them also, though they have no proof whatever, except that you paid in your mission-card on your teacher's return with two entries on it for those very sums, five shillings and ten shillings, which you accounted for rather mysteriously."

"My dear Edward," said Annie, "Mr. Vine has made a mistake; Frank did nothing of the kind. Two people chose to put on his card, the one his initials, the other 'Anon,' instead of their names; how could Frank help that?"

"The ten shillings was given me by the old gentleman who put 'Anon,'" said Frank. "I met him at the top of White Hart Road;" and here Frank went into the particulars already related to Annie, though Mr. Burnard had not before been made acquainted with them. "As to the five shillings," he added, "I can get the person's leave to say who that was, if it is thought best."

"That is so far satisfactory," said Mr. Burnard; "I wish we could find that old gentleman, though. I will advertise for him to-morrow. It would clear up the unpleasant suspicions that somehow or other have found their way into Mr. Vine's mind, and, like other poisonous fungi, are shooting up rapidly."

Harry Duncan then proceeded to question Frank upon various circumstances, and ended by promising to call again in the evening with a young lawyer friend of his, Mr. Embleton, whom he had engaged to undertake the case on Frank's behalf. The dreary day, which seemed to Frank by far the longest he had ever known, at length came to an end, and he went to bed and slept fitfully.

Next morning he was conveyed to the Guildhall along with his fellow-prisoners, and lodged in a room below the court close to the cells.

"How callous and indifferent to my position most of the

people here look," thought poor Frank, as he glanced timidly around him when he stood in the dock. How terrible it had been to hear his name, "Frank Drew," shouted down amongst the cells as if he had been a criminal, and now to stand before men accused of such a woeful violation of God's law as theft. He, a Sunday-school scholar, with all those high and noble hopes of his, respecting mission work. A boy who had dedicated himself to the life of a missionary to be in the dock of Somerleigh Guildhall on a charge of theft. Oh! it was a bitter cup to those young lips; a cruel blow to the father and mother who sat side by side waiting for the case to come on. They had heard the batches of "drunk and disorderly" despatched with, to them—unused as they were to the course of justice—extraordinary haste. And they trembled, and grew alternately hot and cold as each fresh name was called out in the court and echoed below by the policeman.

Frank was before them at last, and the case began.

"Frank Drew."

"Yes, sir."

"Is that your name?"

"Yes, sir."

"You are charged, that you, on the first day of October, 18—, did feloniously take from the shop till, or drawer, of your master, Richard Vine, grocer, the sum of one pound. Have you anything to say?"

"I did not take any money, sir."

"You plead not guilty?"

"Not guilty, sir."

"Has prisoner any one to advise him?" asked a magistrate. Mr. Embleton stepped forward.

Then Mr. Brown gave all the particulars for his client, the prosecutor; he stated the case in a clear plain way, just as if, poor Frank thought, it was quite an allowed and

settled thing that he was guilty. He alluded to Mr. Vine's previous losses of money, and described the curious way in which Frank had accounted for two particular entries amongst the receipts entered on his mission-card. He also noticed the fact that Frank had been particularly anxious to fill this card before his teacher's return, and made the poor lad's laudable ambition seem so culpable a thing that Frank grew hot with the number of eyes that were directed towards him. The lawyer dwelt further on Mr. Vine's generous wish to shield his errand-boy from exposure, and his offer to forgive him the offence if he would make a full confession, which, however, he had obstinately refused to do.

Mr. Vine was then called, and with much nervous blundering gave his testimony.

At this point a magistrate interposed.

"The case seems remarkably clear. Mr. Embleton, the best thing you can do is to advise him to plead guilty. Mr. Vine, even now, does not press for a heavy punishment, and we will at once pass sentence; you had better consult with Mr. Brown, and give the boy this advice."

"How can I plead guilty when I am innocent, sir?" asked Frank from the dock, so simply that people looked at each other in surprise. "I did not take the money."

It was very irregular in Frank to speak at all, and Mr. Embleton hastened to speak for him.

"My client refuses to plead guilty," said he, in more proper form.

"Then we must proceed with the case. If you have any witnesses let them be called."

Annie Burnard stepped forward and was sworn. She gave Frank the highest character, narrated briefly and clearly the circumstances of one or two cases in which his honesty had been put to the test, and expressed her undoubting conviction, that though she could not, of

course, explain how the money came into the pocket of Frank's jacket, yet that he had had no share in the transaction.

Harry Duncan deposed to his knowledge of Frank for more than seven years, that in all that time he had found him an extremely honest boy, and of late years, particularly conscientious and high principled.

Frank's father cleared up the matter of the five shillings on his son's card. And Mr. Brown cross-questioned him, but did not shake his testimony in the least. So all the lawyer could do was to shake his own head as though he would say, it was an easy thing for the father to connive with his son to deceive other people.

Mr. Embleton ably addressed the bench on behalf of his young client. He reminded them of his upright character hitherto, of the steadiness and probity for which he had been admired by those superior to him in station, of Mr. Vine's own appreciation of him until an extremely recent date. He took care to inform them that the mission-card had already been filled before the marked sovereign was found upon him, a fact which would do away altogether with the suggested motive for stealing the money; he referred to the proof that the previous smaller sum of five shillings, supposed at first by Mr. Vine to have been taken from him by Frank Drew and entered on the missionary-card under a fictitious initial, had been really given to him by his father, the proceeds of overtime in his week's work, a circumstance highly creditable to both parent and child. He demanded earnestly whether it was from such fathers and such sons that they expected to reap a harvest of criminals? He hinted that some malicious person must be trying to injure Frank Drew, and he wound up by an able peroration, beseeching them not to ruin the lad's good name, hitherto so blameless and unspotted, for there was no proof that he

had taken it, nor was the pocket in which it was found a likely place for a lad to secrete money in.

But the magistrates had already made up their minds that Frank was guilty; and, after conferring a little, they came to a decision. One of them thus addressed the prisoner:—

"Frank Drew, there can be but little doubt in the minds of any present that you are guilty of the alleged offence. The few who are so kindly prejudiced in your favour," and he glanced to where Annie sat between her husband and brother-in-law, "must allow that the proof is against you. We should have willingly granted you a remand had you asked for it, or had there been the least probability of anything arising to throw further light upon the subject. The marked sovereign is lost, and it is found in your possession. Much inclined as we are to take into account your hitherto blameless reputation, it is necessary we should also take into account how you have betrayed your master's trust, and how you have obstinately refused to do what was the only proper course open to you—namely, to own your guilt, and accept the slight punishment which would then have met the requirements of the case, especially as your master added his kind recommendation to mercy. Our sentence now is that you be imprisoned in the city jail six calendar months."

Frank fell helpless into the arms of the jailor: the boy had fainted. Since Saturday night he had taken but little food, his feelings had been on the rack, and now the case had lasted for some hours in a close court. It was not to be wondered at that exhausted nature succumbed. Mrs. Drew at that sight involuntarily rushed forward towards her boy, but Frank was borne away, and the poor mother was drawn gently and tenderly out of the court by her husband, weeping most bitterly as she went.

Annie Burnard, scarcely less white than Frank had been, hardly believing her own senses when she heard that hope-

less sentence, unable to realize that one of her boys, the best boy in her class, was a prisoner for six long months, leaned on her husband's arm and tottered from the place to her pony-carriage outside, in which she proposed to drive Mrs. Drew to her home. But before the poor woman had taken the seat beside Annie, Harry Duncan came to tell them that he had found they might see Frank before he was taken away, and bid him good-bye. Frank Drew's bright joyous young face could scarcely be recognised in the pallid, woeful countenance that now met theirs.

"It would have been better for me to have told the lie they all advised me to tell, and then I should be free," he said bitterly. "Oh! Mrs. Burnard, how *can* I believe God is just, if He allows such injustice as this?"

Poor Frank! Other and wiser minds than his have asked that question, and God Himself has condescended to answer them so gloriously, that they have never doubted again, but have cried henceforth, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

"Come what may, cost what it will, you will never really wish that you had told a lie, Frank," said Harry Duncan, holding the boy's hand in his, and looking into his heavy eyes; "you had better be in prison all your life for speaking the truth, than in a palace for speaking false."

"Let me give you a work to do, dear Frank, in these six months," Annie Burnard said; "mark in your Bible and learn by heart, if possible, every text you can find concerning the justice of God. I wonder whether there is a text for every day on God's justice. Great works have been done in prisons, Frank; think of Bunyan and Sir Walter Raleigh. Do *your* work, and it will help to make the time less tedious; and, oh! remember, dear boy, that 'prayer will be made without ceasing unto God for you;' and He who delivered Peter from unjust imprisonment can also deliver you."

"I would not have Frank think harshly of his j
said Mr. Burnard; "they had to consider the subje
no previous knowledge of him to help them to form
conclusion; and looked at in that way, with the f
the case apparently so strong against him, we cannot
at their decision. But keep a brave heart, Frank,
you can, sleep all you can, be pleasant, obliging, an
ask for some work and do it—anything is better tha
ness—and we shall not forget you. If only the old
man would turn up!"

Frank tried to smile but failed.

"He may yet," Mr. Burnard went on cheerily; "I
if he sees my advertisement he will answer it. Well
bye, Frank, we must go. If you cannot find work y
better when you come out, we'll take you into o
employ, that's a bargain."

"You are true friends, Mr. Burnard, and dear M
can," said poor Frank, with tears in his eyes, as he
them by the hand ere they left him. It was Anni
next.

"Frank," she said, "as one whom his mother com
God will comfort you within these prison walls.'
stooped over him and touched his pale forehead ligh
her lips. It was the kiss of peace. And then she l
to his parents. Words cannot rightly render the
that rent the hearts of the mother and her boy, th
and his son, as they parted. Surely there is the bi
of death in such cruel separations.

CHAPTER XXII.

AUNT MAY'S BOY.

"MAY, rejoice with me; you have a little nephew at Eglinton Terrace."

May Duncan was lying in her old place upon her couch when her brother Harry burst in upon her, with his brightest smile, and uttered these words.

"Oh! that *is* good news," said May, her voice and looks full of sympathy; "sit down and tell me all about it, Harry. How is Maggie?"

"Getting on quite well. Of course he's the most beautiful boy in the world," said Harry.

"Save those who are prettier," suggested May.

"May, you're as bad as Maggie," rejoined Harry, laughing.

"And he's exactly like me, the very image."

"All boys are," said May.

"What, like me?" questioned Harry, demurely.

"Provoking man! no, like their fathers."

"Sententious philosopher, don't interrupt me again. He has brown eyes, at any rate, very little hair, and the smallest mouth, nose, hands, and feet that I ever beheld."

"You are satisfied with him altogether, I presume?" she asked, merrily, looking into Harry's eyes.

"Satisfied!" said Harry Duncan. "My dear May, I never was so satisfied in my life. As if it wasn't enough, and more than I deserved, that I should have my Maggie, but this treasure is added also."

"I wonder when I shall see him," said May. "Harry, though I have been aunt so long, and to so many dear pets,

this little fellow seems a nearer relation to me than any of them, for you, Harry, have been father, brother, friend, to me—the one person dearest in the world."

Harry knew it was so, and he stooped and kissed his invalid sister affectionately.

"It hasn't made so much difference in your love for me, Harry, as I used to fear," May said.

"What hasn't, May?"

"Your marriage, Harry. Maggie is more to me than I lost. And you yourself never forget me. My Saturday flowers are as fair as ever, and as unfailing, and you always come to me as you have come now, with the first burst of glad tidings to give to me, as in the old days."

"I am so glad you feel like this, May. When I began to love Maggie, I strove against the feeling for your sake. But only for a little while; I learnt soon that it was an impossibility for my heart not to love her, and I did not feel that it made me love you less, but more. And it is true of all honest, pure love, that it endears all old loves instead of lessening them. The more we love, the more God has made us able to love; our hearts have a wonderful power of extension, like a miniature of the Almighty heart. Here comes to-day a fresh claimant for my love, in the person of my firstborn son, and, May, I feel that for him there is an unspringing well of affection, as deep and strong as it is possible to imagine."

"And what will you call the little laddie?"

"Our fathers' names, Maggie's and mine."

"I don't know what Mr. Griffiths was called."

"Albert."

"Albert William, and for a pet name, Bertie, I conclude."

"I know Maggie will agree to what you choose for his pet name. He will be very much your boy, May."

Those who heard Harry Duncan preach that autumn and

winter, and the boys in his flourishing class in West Lane, noticed with what wonderful power he taught them of the fatherhood of God from his own experience with his little son. Every blessing that Harry Duncan received seemed to ennoble and mellow his Christian character—to make him tenderer to others' sorrows, and more charitable to those who sinned. As for May, Harry's firstborn was to her also a gift of joy. Baby Bertie, like a dutiful child, "took to" his Aunt May as entirely as Harry could desire. He was a dear little round-faced, brown-eyed baby, plump and warm, who took life easily from the very first, and seldom cried; only now and then indulging in a good honest hearty fit, which cleared the air for an infinite amount of smiling, crowing, and rejoicing generally. Maggie herself was hardly prouder of her new treasure than was Aunt May of her dear little nephew.

For some time, during the very earliest part of his existence, May had an accession of pain, which called forth the anxiety of her relatives. In these days of increased weakness, Bertie was her amusement and her solace. Wrapped up in layers of softest, warmest shawls, till he looked like a bundle of railway rugs, and you expected to see him bound round with a leather strap, and conveyed to the nearest railway station, Bertie drove from Eglinton Terrace to Aunt May's with dignified quietude and propriety, to which his wraps doubtless conduced. But when unrolled and exhibited to view in soft white garments, with the bluest of armlets and sashes, and laid upon the gay hearthrug before Aunt May's cosy fire, he experienced a change, and expanded with the genial warmth into the jolliest little fellow imaginable. He displayed such astonishing feats with legs and arms, and fat dimpled hands, as made Aunt May laugh, however pale and tired she had looked before Bertie came, so that grandmamma declared de-

lightedly he was as good as a medicine, which some may reckon but doubtful praise.

And as the months matured his powers, he would raise himself by her couch, after crawling frantically round the room, and peep at her on tip-toe, and pat her face, and smoothe her tenderly with his thick little fingers, and express to her in baby language—so pretty, if we could only understand it—the tenderness both of his inherited and acquired affection for her. "May" was most undoubtedly the first English word he ever spoke, and Maggie, who had been coaxing him with sugar-plums, and those still sweeter things her prettiest kisses, to say "papa," felt considerably humbled, though she laughed merrily at May's triumph. And Harry Duncan laughed, and caught the little fellow in his arms, and rewarded him with the romping he liked so well, and told him he knew from the very first that he was going to be his Aunt May's boy.

As the child grew older, it seemed to come quite naturally to him to fulfil the wishes of them all in this respect. It was partly pity, perhaps, but mostly love that made him choose to sit with her, playing with his toys in pretty quiet fashion. He came to her in his troubles and his joys, and was as sure of her attention and sympathy as his father had been before him. And when Maggie could no longer come so often with him, being detained by the later olive branches who one after another clustered round the table of No. 7, Eglinton Terrace, Bertie was content to come alone. And Aunt May was every bit as much wrapped up in the child as Bertie was fond of her. The dear, merry, happy, affectionate little fellow sweetened and brightened her whole life. He kissed away the clouds, he sang away her grievances, and went joyously to do her bidding. Bertie was Aunt May's connecting link with active life; she felt her imprisonment to the sofa so much less now that he was so often at hand

to go her errands, to reach her what she wanted, and to destroy the tedium of sickness.

There is a ministration in suffering as well as in action. May realized this now that years had passed since she began her life work, and those who watched her and watched that work realized it much more than she did. Her teachings to her young servants,—a whole class of whom had now grown up beyond the immediate influence of her presence, —were permeating with gentle blessed results the homes to which these girls had gone, inspiring them with higher aims for husband and children than merely to prepare their food and clothes. And the class was always full; there were eager applicants to obtain admission to its limited numbers as soon as ever it was known that a girl was to be married, or to leave it for any other reason.

And now that May's child-relatives were brought close to her, it became apparent to all that she had also a winning sweetness that especially endeared her to children.

"To be with May is far better for our little ones than all the teaching we could possibly give them concerning patience," said Harry to Maggie, some years later.

"Yes," agreed Maggie, "you should hear how Bertie talks to them about her, if they are unreasonable or impatient for some little thing. 'Why, children,' he said yesterday, 'Aunt May bears a life of pain better than you do five minutes of it.'"

"A life of pain—yes, that is it," said Harry, "and a life of patience. We who only see her, and have not the thing itself to bear, can make no guess how tired she often must be of lying so much in that one room, on that one couch."

"I said something of the kind to her last week," said Maggie, "and she answered, looking so bright and happy as she spoke, 'That is not how I put it, Maggie; I say to myself often :—

'Not more than others I deserve,
Yet God has given me more;'

And Bertie, who was listening to us, went on quite gravely—

'For I am fed, while others starve,
Or beg from door to door.'"

"Dear old boy," said Harry; "he's tremendously practical, and Aunt May's boy altogether."

CHAPTER XXIII.

JESSIE'S CHRYSANTHEMUMS.

THE Flower of the Grassmarket was soon quite at home in Rose Villa. By the time a few weeks had passed, her little form seemed so familiar to the eyes that watched her as she moved hither and thither, that it was difficult for them to fancy the place without her. And this fair blossom, who, in a rough soil, and amidst adverse circumstances, had lifted her meek head heavenwards, and cast her fragrance on the drear waste around, lost neither modesty nor sweetness by being transplanted to the rich soil of a cultivated garden, of which she was a chief ornament and cherished plant. Jessie soon won friends, and the wee Scotch lassie walked straight into many a kind heart that had an open door for her to enter. After a few weeks, settled arrangements were made respecting her. Annie Burnard determined that she would, for the present, educate her at home; she gave up to Jessie as punctually as if she had been her governess the three morning hours from half-past nine to half-past twelve, and aunt and niece shut themselves up in what had once been Maggie's parlour, a room now devoted to Jessie's instruction, and studied diligently. Jessie was an apt scholar, Annie a patient teacher, and as the child grew older, and evinced an interest in higher branches of knowledge, the lessons became almost as delightful to the one as the other, and irksome to neither.

The child's favourite recreation was gardening, and a plot of ground was given to her for her own. This portion was already rich in the presence of a bed containing a variety of chrysanthemums, which, a few weeks after Jessie came to

Somerleigh, began to blossom. It was a matter of intense interest to her to guess at their colours before they opened, and then to find whether she had surmised aright. Annie laughed, and said Jessie had a fortune in her flowers.

The events of interest to her uncle and aunt that so quickly followed her adoption were, poor Frank Drew's trouble, and the birth of Bertie Duncan. Both these circumstances called largely on Annie's sympathy, the one sorrowfully, the other joyfully. The baby boy in Eglinton Terrace was Jessie's delight, from the first day she saw him, when he was only a few hours old, through all the advancing stages of his infantile life, and Maggie was only too glad when Annie spared Jessie to come and spend the day with her and Bertie; she made such an excellent little playfellow and nurse.

Jessie had heard Frank's story, and had naturally been much interested in it; indeed it was so much and so often the subject of conversation between her uncle and aunt, that she had felt very curious to see him, and had wished very much that they would take her with them when they went to his trial. But Edward and Annie Burnard had no desire to shade with sorrow they could not mitigate the life of their human floweret.

The early part of the winter of that year was unusually mild, and Jessie's flowers, always in perfection in November, were not spoiled by severe weather, either frosts or storms, through the ensuing month; and the week or two before Christmas they looked almost as well as ever. One morning about this time Annie said to her husband, "I wish I could think of any plan to have a peep at that poor boy, Edward. Could I get permission to visit him?"

"Scarcely, I fear, Annie. But," added Edward Burnard, after a little reflection, "you might get permission to see over the prison."

"Oh! so I might. I never thought of it; thank you for that good suggestion. I will go to-day."

"Auntie, will you take me with you?" Jessie's eyes were reading her aunt's face for an answer.

"It is a dismal place; I am going to a prison, Jessie. I don't think you would at all enjoy going there."

"I will be glad if you'll take me."

"Take her," said Edward Burnard; "I remember that Mr. Stanhope said he wished to see over the jail. Call at Mrs. Duncan's and ask him and his wife to go with you."

Rhoda Stanhope, Mrs. Duncan's eldest daughter, and her husband were on a visit to their mother at this time.

"That will do very nicely," said Annie; "I hope it may suit them to go to-day."

"May I gather my wee flowers for him?"

"For whom, Jessie?"

"For the poor boy, Frank Drew."

"Certainly you may, they are your own to do with as you like; but we may not be able to give them to him."

"She can try," said Edward Burnard, feeling a strange joy at the sweet impulse that made his little niece desire to befriend the sorrowful. "And you had best go directly after breakfast."

So Jessie made a great gay nosegay of her flowers, gathering them with unsparing eye and willing hand. Her beautiful large chrysanthemums, delicate primrose-coloured ones, and white and pink, and deep red like roses, and her buff-and-gold, and ruby-and-silver buttons, as she called the smaller kind, in their pretty clusters. She stripped her plants till they looked quite bare, in her eagerness to have enough; and while she was thus busy Annie made herself ready, and then they set out, and took the omnibus to the market-place, from which it was not far to Mrs. Duncan's. Mr. and Mrs. Stanhope were glad of the opportunity, and were soon ready.

Arrived at the prison, they entered their names, and the governor, a benevolent-looking man, himself accompanied them over the premises. They first saw the female side of the jail, and so many eyes were turned wistfully at Jessie's flowers, that she slipped a few out from her nosegay again and again, and put them gently into the hands of the prisoners, who seemed to long for them. Whether the governor noticed it or not, he did not interrupt her. By the time they reached the men's side about half her flowers were gone, but she had still a bunch of ordinary size, of very gay appearance. They had inspected the cells and been into the exercise ground, and Annie had not yet caught a glimpse of her poor Frank. On entering the kitchen, the governor, who was close to her, remarked that one or two of the boys who behaved well were allowed to assist the cooks.

"That one," he said, and he pointed to Frank Drew, "is a very good boy indeed; I never had a quieter or more orderly lad in the place. Had I not known that he was convicted of theft, I should have supposed him to be a really pious boy. He seems to enjoy the services on the Sunday, and to study his Bible so diligently."

Jessie stood by her aunt as the governor talked of Frank; then she looked up in the kind, grave face, and said, "May I give him the flowers, sir?"

"You may, my little girl," said the governor, looking down into her sweet eyes with an expression of much interest.

She drew near Frank. He was engaged in the prosaic work of preparing potatoes for cooking. She held out the bright, gay flowers.

"They are for you, the gentleman says you may have them," she said; and Frank dropped his knife and took them, and thanked her, and on prison ground his brown eyes met for the first time those lovely blue eyes of the

"She held out the bright, gay flowers. 'They are for you, the gentleman says you may have them,' she said."

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little Flower of the Grassmarket. He would never forget their sweet expression of love and pity for him. From Jessie, as she ran back to her aunt, he looked at the rest of the party, and beheld his dear teacher among them. His first impulse was to rush forward and bless her for coming, the next he remembered prison discipline. But as their glance met, and Mrs. Burnard smiled at him, and Frank's face flushed as he answered her gaze, he felt that a load was lifted from his heart. Nothing could change Mrs. Burnard to him; she had not learnt to doubt his truth. Spite of prison dress and cropped hair, and man's judgment, she believed in him yet. That was indeed a golden day in Frank's prison life. And the flowers, and the fair child who had given them! He had never seen Jessie before, but he knew who she was, and he blessed her for her kindly pretty deed. He took the chrysanthemums to his cell when his duties in the kitchen were over, with his tin cup full of water for them which he had begged of the cook; and he spent a longer time over those flowers than he could have believed possible in his days of careless liberty when flowers were about his path. He set them in order again and again, varying the disposition of them till they exactly pleased his fancy; and their bright colours and the kind thought that gave them to him made even his prison cell endurable. They were Rose Villa flowers, he felt sure. He remembered that the garden was always gay with them till the cold weather set in. And then he fell to fancying the little figure of Jessie Burnard flitting from plant to plant, plucking them for him, a solitary lad in a prison. What a pretty little girl she was, what soft fair hair she had, what pretty blue eyes, and how sweetly she talked!

His dear teacher, what had brought her to the prison that morning? Had she guests who desired to see the arrangements, and had she willingly accompanied them, to

have a peep at him? Those two sweet faces were with him in his dreams, and when the dim light came into his cell again, it showed to him Jessie's chrysanthemums. For that day on which the flowers came and the next he was too happy and too grateful to seek out any other texts than those which spoke of God's goodness and mercy.

But the task Annie had set him had beguiled many a weary hour, and in his memory he was laying up a store—a treasury of proofs of God's justice—which would serve him hereafter on occasions which he little thought of then. Annie had used this idea in her class as well; she told them of what Frank Drew was doing day after day in prison, and asked them to keep pace with their old schoolfellow, and to bring her every week, written on paper, seven texts illustrating or describing God's justice. And she would keep them, and when Frank came back to them they would have a comparing of texts, which would be interesting to all of them.

But not even Jessie's chrysanthemums nor his teacher's smile could keep poor Frank from fits of despondency, to which, as time went on, he more and more frequently gave way. The sense of being imprisoned crept around him like a fatal atmosphere that stifled his good spirits and depressed his very soul. And no hope of earlier release came to lighten his melancholy; the long days lengthened into weary weeks, and the weary weeks were protracted into dreary months, and still the weight of the walls fell closer and closer and more heavily upon him.

Christmas Day in prison tortured him; he had intended to have such a happy Christmas that year. He had already begun to save a few pence to buy a Christmas tree for his little sister, and now neither father nor mother nor Janie could he see that day. The clashing and pealing of the bells came to the inmates of the prison, though it was some-

what out of the town, for the weather had set in clear and bright and cold, and the wind brought the sound to their ears. But these Christmas bells brought no gladness to his heart. He tried to remember all there was to make him feel glad at this season. For He was born who came "to preach deliverance to the captives, and the opening of the prison doors to them that were bound;" and, sad as he was, Frank was thankful to believe that spiritually he himself was free indeed.

The old year that had brought him so much sorrow was nearly spent, when the jailer came to Frank's cell, and asked him whether he would like a visitor to read and pray with him.

"'Tis Miss Johnson," said the man; "she gets leave to go her rounds every year about this season. You needn't see her unless you want to. I shall be here too."

The man was right, Frank "needn't see her unless he wanted to." Dora was one of those sensible people who do not believe in forcing religion down a person's throat when that person is as resolutely determined not to swallow it. She did not think that prisoners who had been *made* to come and listen to her would be very much the better for her visit to them. But she did believe that if they were asked and voluntarily accepted her visit as a personal matter, such intercourse might, by God's blessing, be productive of good to their immortal souls. The same fearlessness with which Dora met the terrible physical evil, small-pox, she evinced now in meeting the victims of moral plagues; and in both cases her bravery was the result of perfect confidence in her God; that strong faith that removes mountains, makes hard things easy and crooked things straight.

"Oh, yes," said Frank, "I should like to see Miss Johnson very much."

The tall graceful figure entered; her long flowing dress

was of a dark-brown silk, that rustled softly after her, as Frank thought, it was murmuring its gladness at being in her company. Her grey bonnet was of the shape formerly so generally worn by the "Friends," but which is now fast going "out of fashion;" and under it the sweet face looked very simple and frank and modest. She carried her little Bible in her hand, and sat down so easily and so much at home at once in the prison cell, that Frank could but admire her and feel surprised at her.

"I have thought," she said, looking at him, and speaking very gently, "that thou wouldest perhaps like a visit from me at this solemn season of the year. It is a season when we naturally like to feel ourselves amongst those whom we love; and when by any circumstance—whether by the providence of God or our own wrong doing—we are separated from our dear ones, it seems good to hear the tones of a kind voice, and to know that a heart is near us full of sympathy for our sufferings."

Frank thanked her for coming, and assured her that he felt she spoke truly.

And then she went on from an assurance of her own human sympathy to that far surer Divine Love and care which was around even the most degraded and abandoned and impenitent sinner. She lifted up before him, with her delicate yet firm unfaltering hands, the standard of the cross, and pointing to Him who bled and died upon it, she cried, like John of old, "Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world."

It was impossible for Frank, whose heart glowed with pleasure at this faithful exposition of the Redeemer's work, not to acknowledge his Master, and to tell her that he too delighted to cry, "My Lord and my God!" in unbounded admiration and gratitude for the love he shared and the pardon he had known.

"The Almighty has then been teaching thee," said Dora, "in thy lonely hours. He has so blessed thy soul that thou hast come to a prison to learn what it is to be 'free indeed.'"

"No," said Frank; "I loved Him before I came here."

"Then thou hast backslidden, and left thy first Love?"

"No," said Frank again, colouring painfully; "but this is a subject, Miss Johnson, on which we had better not enter; you could do no good to me by our talking of it, and the prison authorities would doubtless blame you for doing so."

"True," she said, "thou art right; I esteem thee for thy caution and prudence. But as Christians we may rejoice and praise God together for all that He has done for us, and for all the yet greater things, 'more than we can ask or think,' that He is still willing to perform."

And so they read and prayed and took sweet counsel together until the allotted time had expired, and then, with Frank's blessing for her kindness echoing in her heart, she carried her sweet message afresh into another cell and to far duller ears. But when the old year died away, and his knell was echoed in the music of the bells, Dora Johnson's prison-work came up to God "for a memorial of her." And Frank listened with more of peaceful trust to the new year's welcoming peal for her kind service.

We read that in the old romantic days of chivalry, the young men, before they made their solemn profession, swore the vows of knighthood, and were girt with their armour, spent the whole night in a church in prayer and fasting. The loneliness of this preparatory watch-night, the spectral terrors of its vigils to the excited youth, the consecration and dedication which it manifested, have been enshrined in stirring legend and glowing poetry, and he who entered the sanctuary at evening an unpanoplied youth, emerged at morn an armed knight, ready to unsheathe his sword and to

display his prowess. What the lonely church, haunted and silent in the dead hours of night, was to the young squire of old, Somerleigh prison—its empty corridors, its solitary cells —was to Frank Drew; in it, frightened though he was at the shadows, and awed by the solemn stillness, he kept the vigil of his knighthood; in it he buckled on the armour for the combat; forth from it he would emerge to fight the battles of his God.

CHAPTER XXIV.

MRS. TYNDALL.

"ARE you going to bring your little Jessie to Taylor Street, Mrs. Burnard?"

"We have been thinking of it," said Annie, a little doubtfully, "but we don't quite see in whose class to place her."

"Will you let her come to me?" said the speaker, who was an old lady above seventy years of age, but with a fresh, buoyant face and manner, as if, like a good swimmer, she had battled with every wave of life and come up stronger each time for her bold exercise of strength.

"Oh! Mrs. Tyndall, how kind; I never thought that you would be able to take her; you have your full number. But if you can, I could wish for nothing better," said Annie.

Mrs. Tyndall was leaning on the arm of her son, himself an elderly man, the father of growing-up sons and daughters, and a deacon of the church in Taylor Street. She showed some decrepitude in walking, and could only move slowly, but the feebleness did not reach either brain or heart, which were only richer and grander and stronger and more tender for all the experience of her seventy years. She was an enthusiastic Sunday-school teacher. She had taught, when young, in her native village, amongst the agriculturists of the east of England, where her father was the clergyman. She had married and come to Somerleigh, and brought up a family of Sunday-school teachers in another denomination of Christians in her middle life; and she had gone back to the work herself with all her old love and fire.

There is a text in the Bible regarding Moses, the man of

God, at the period of his death, which reads thus: "His eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated." These words were singularly applicable to Mrs. Tyndall in her old age. To see her in her class, amidst the group of children from nine to sixteen years of age, was to see a mother in Israel, "with beaming eyes, eloquent lips, and powerful energies," working whilst "it was yet day, for the night cometh wherein no man can work."

It was esteemed a privilege by both parents and children to enter Mrs. Tyndall's class, and this had nothing whatever to do with the prestige of her age and position. If age is unlovely, children are extremely quick to find it out, and nothing can compensate to them for the absence of lovingness and lovableness in their teacher. But Mrs. Tyndall's plans of teaching were so attractive, her manner so kind, yet withal so bracing and work-inspiring; her knowledge at once so correct, so deep, and so boundless; her stories so beautiful, her illustrations so graphic, her questions so pointed, that it was delightful to learn of her.

In our modern conceit it is the fashion for the children rather than the fathers to declare "wisdom dwells with us," and to imagine that older generations, to whom we kindly accord a portion of this world's dry land, with permission to dwell thereon, are, compared to ourselves, ignorant, untrained, unlearned—in short, *primitive;* and it is the tendency of too many books that are written, and words that are spoken, at the present day, to foster, spread, and uphold this idea, which the young in their vanity assume to be the undoubted fact.

Whereas, if the truth be told, there are men and women of past generations, who had, it is very true, fewer opportunities for acquiring those "higher branches of knowledge," of which we hear so much, than their children have, but who made so much better and more conscientious use of the

knowledge it was possible for them to obtain, that if their descendants would sit humbly at their feet to learn of them, instead of boasting of their own various smatterings of knowledge, it would be far better for us all.

Mrs. Tyndall was one of these carefully and thoroughly cultured women and her class in consequence was really educated by her, most in accordance with the advanced ideas of modern attainments, of all the classes in Taylor Street Sunday-school. She had the happy art, too, of teaching pictorially. Her words made pictures, rich in colouring, skilful in grouping, lively in detail. Few of the class who went with her through the period of the Deluge could ever forget the ark and its inmates. These were series of lessons not only in Bible history, but in conchology, ornithology, and zoology; and the wondrous processions of animals, familiar and delightful to all children, were henceforth made to every member of this class instinct with God's power and beauty and delicacy of workmanship. His brush, the brush of the Creator of all human artists, painted the graceful hue of beauty on the tiger's glossy skin, and spotted the leopard's coat. His chisel pointed the tusks of the mighty elephant and the horn of the rhinoceros, and sharpened the thin variegated quills of the porcupine. His hands shaped the glittering glories of the peacock's tail, and wrought the curling feathers of the gorgeous birds of paradise; and the humming birds, reflecting rainbow tints, flew straight from the fingers of the all-creating God.

What a lesson she found for them in the latter part of the fourth chapter of Genesis! How the canopy of canvas was outspread, and the lowing herds covered the plains, as they talked of Lamech's sons, and the turbaned Jubal came upon the scene! What a noise of digging, and blasting, and blaze of furnaces; and what forging and melting and casting of iron, Tubal-Cain's name called into view, and how swiftly

the harrow and plough were in the fields, and the axe felled the mighty trees of the forest as they gazed! What melodies and harmonies, what sweet monotones, and symphonies, came echoing down the centuries into their ears from out the rapt patriarch Jubal's harp and organ!

One of Mrs. Tyndall's children once heard a young companion complain that she hated to read and to learn the Bible, because it was such a "dry" book.

"Dry!" exclaimed Mary, in surprise, "how can you call it so? Why it's *full* of all manner of beautiful things. You can't have read it, Lena."

Nor were those higher qualities, love and faith, less conspicuous than knowledge in Mrs. Tyndall. She had known so many diversities of outward fortune in her long life, so much of joy and gladness and prosperity, so much also of sorrow, pain, and anxiety, that, as she said, the minor and major keys were alike familiar, for she had been taught to play thoroughly in both; and there were tunes in each which she loved to remember. Truly "patience" had had in her its "perfect work," and she was to become "perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

It was no wonder that Edward and Annie Burnard gladly accepted such a Sunday-school teacher for Jessie. The next Sunday their little niece went with them to Taylor Street and into the girls' schoolroom, where, for the third time in her young life, she found herself in a different Sabbath-school. How different were her own circumstances now to the time when she joined the class of little invalids gathered around dear Nurse McAlpine, or even when she sat beside kind Miss Lorimer, repeating her catechism and hearing from her the words of truth and righteousness, which she was so well able to speak about! It was with a feeling of tender love for those dear teachers in he poverty and need, and of gratitude for her present lot,

that the Flower of the Grassmarket began to listen to Mrs. Tyndall.

And the love of Christ, which Jessie had first learnt to know and estimate from the good Scotch nurse in the ward of the Children's Hospital, was the golden link that ran through Miss Lorimer's teaching like a thread of light, and now shone again throughout the instruction in this Somerleigh school.

Mrs. Tyndall kept both the brain and heart of each child busy. Her class consisted of twelve girls. She kept as near as she could to this number, she said, out of regard to her own dear children, who would not allow her to work very hard.

Each of the girls was the centre of or co-worker in a little sphere of Christian labour, which Mrs. Tyndall had suggested or encouraged. "Freely have ye received, freely give, dear ones," she would say to them very often. The special charge of one was to visit an old blind woman every Sunday, to liberate her daughter to attend her place of worship. Other two sisters had adopted between them an orphan child, whom they boarded with a poor widow, and they had to work for the little one's support in most of their leisure moments. It was the business of two others, week and week in turn, to attend to the outdoor wants of a poor aged couple, neither of whom had strength to run errands. Yet another was teaching a crippled child to read, because he was too lame to attend school. Several had their mothers' servants to help educationally; and to all who had gardens, what Mrs. Tyndall called a "ministry of beautifying" had been entrusted. Once a month their teacher gave them a subject for a written essay. Sometimes she chose a Scripture character—Job, Noah, Daniel, Paul—when they were to write all the particulars of their history which they could remember without consulting their Bibles. At another

time the subject embraced a given period, such as the career of Gideon, of Samson, or of Absalom.

"I am so glad ye have sent me to Mrs. Tyndall's class, auntie," said Jessie, as they walked home; "she's given me a work to do for Christ."

"What has she set you about, darling?" asked Annie.

"I'm to take a bunch of flowers every week to a sick laddie called Tom Raeburn, who lives across yon street; and I'm to make a set o' letters from the newspapers and bills that you will give me to cut up and stick on card, for a wee bit lassie who has no father to buy her anything to play with. Oh! I do like my school, auntie. Isna Mrs. Tyndall bonnie wi' her snow white hair, and her dark eyes, and her bright smile, and the ruddy colour on her cheeks! Ay, but she *is* bonnie, and I do love her."

Mrs. Tyndall had one inflexible law about her girls—she would not keep any in her class above the age of sixteen. At that age, she maintained, a girl should herself begin to teach; and one purpose she had much at heart was to educate a band of efficient teachers, who might carry on her work when her voice was silent and her place empty.

CHAPTER XXV.

OUT FOR A SAIL.

MR. AND MRS. BELLMAN could not tell what to make of their son. They were uneasy about him, and in his periodical Sunday visits put him through an examination as to his state of health, and his satisfaction with his master, and with the shop, which never resulted in their getting to know at all more of the boy's real mind than if they had not so asked. There are some people naturally so secretive in disposition that were you to live with them you would not really know them, and "Monkey" was of this number.

He began to neglect his Sunday-school, not by staying away week after week, which would have excited much inquiry, but by taking a holiday now and then, with just sufficient time between to prevent remark. And Annie Burnard, who knew how much less time "Monkey" had with his parents since he had been apprenticed to Mr. Vine than formerly, was never surprised when he told her that his mother had wished him to stay with her, or that his father had taken him for a walk on the downs. Walks on the downs were taken by Frank Bellman, there was no falsehood about that, but he utterly deceived his teacher when he made her believe that his father accompanied him. Instead of this, his companions were such as his honest father would never have chosen for his son. Idle, dissolute-looking lads they were, who taught "Monkey" to smoke and to drink beer and to play cards, and, in general, to do the very things his parents would desire he should not do.

They were lads who walked from Somerleigh to the little villages in the outskirts on Sabbath afternoons, where, presenting themselves as *bonâ-fide* travellers to landlords who possessed easy and not far-reaching consciences, they were welcomed into stuffy little parlours in winter to smoke long clay pipes, with mugs of beer at their elbows, and packs of dirty cards in their equally dirty fingers; and so they lolled away the hours that should have been spent in the Sunday-school or the Bible-class, and called it "enjoyment." In summer the amusement was varied, and so far improved, that instead of sitting in the small rooms, to become nearly half suffocated by their poisonous, heavily impregnated atmosphere, they sat in *arbours* and *bowers*, which might more properly have been termed "boxes," in a garden, with trees around them and birds singing and flowers blooming.

What a grand thing it would be if these lads—and there are hundreds and thousands of them in our land—could be tempted to a nobler life on their day of rest. Is there a possibility of reaching them by any of the machinery which Sunday-schools and their teachers can set in motion? Are the dulness, the apathy, the want of sympathy with their condition in the preachers, which occasionally drive away working men from churches and chapels, also operating to keep away the lads from their Sunday-school teachers? Of course there are many, who, like "Monkey," knowingly and of choice accept the evil and reject the good; but are there not others going thoughtlessly, and for want of knowing better, with the mass? It is certainly sad and strange, that while the law rigorously closes to such lads places of rational amusement and lawful instruction, it opens to them the pot-house and the tavern, where they may, Sunday as well as week-day, drown their purity and their senses together in barrels of beer and hogsheads of spirit. We do not insist that the picture-gallery and museum shall be open, but we

do entreat, in the interests of the morality of the young, in the name of the Sunday-schools and their disappointed teachers, that the public-houses may be universally shut.

Six or seven miles from Somerleigh, the tidal river on which the city stands flows into the ocean. At the mouth of the river, perched on either rocky shore, are two fishing villages. On fine Sunday afternoons it was a favourite amusement of some of the Somerleigh people to row in open boats, or to proceed in the small steamers that plied to and fro, to either Poynor's Haven or Mellby.

"Monkey" was never short of money, being kept well supplied by his indulgent parents, and it was for this reason —and had he been wiser he might have known it—that his company was sought by his new acquaintances.

In the early spring time, when Frank Drew was congratulating himself that his weary imprisonment was nearly at an end, a party of lads, Frank Bellman amongst them, set sail in the afternoon from Somerleigh for Poynor's Haven, the favourite one of the two villages before mentioned. It was a brilliant day in April, with a sky of clear blue, a high wind, reminding one of the March that had only just bidden the earth good-bye, and a bright sun. Only one of the party, eight in number, professed to have much knowledge of navigation, and his acquaintance was with ships rather than boats. But gaily and carelessly they sailed away to Poynor's Haven. So many people had availed themselves of the bright weather, that the little village was unusually full, and the public-houses and tea-houses did a wonderful amount of business in beer, tobacco, tea, and shrimps.

The little steamer soon filled in the evening, and many of those who were disappointed of places hired boats. Will Dennis, whom the other lads had made captain of the party that day, in compliment to his superior acquaintance-

ship with the water, came out of the "Fisherman's Joy,' followed by the others, at a rather late hour. They were none of them drunk save Frank Bellman, on whom the quantity of liquor he had swallowed, he being accustomed to very sober habits, had made an undoubted impression, and he was so much trouble to them all, in his present wild, mischievous mood, that if it had not been his money which was to pay for the boat, they would have been extremely willing to leave him behind them.

As the Sunday excursionists walked over the sands a young man respectably dressed accosted them.

"Do you know any way," he asked, "of getting back to Somerleigh? I have missed the steamer, and every other chance too, I fear."

"We've got a boat, sir; we can take you for a bob, if you've a mind to go," said Will Dennis, with whom funds were at an exceedingly low ebb just then, and who saw no harm in earning a fare for himself in "Monkey's" boat.

The man looked first at the sky and then at the small craft before him.

"Your boat is a very small one for nine of us," said he, "if the weather turns nasty, and it looks rather likely—but I must be back to-night, so here goes."

It was difficult to get Frank Bellman into his place, and his extremely plain person was by no means improved by his excess, but after exposing himself for some time to the ridicule of those present, he sank to sleep, and no one was sorry. Half an hour later "Monkey" was awakened by a terrible noise; awakened to find that a sudden storm from the ocean was sweeping up the river with awful and violent force. As night came down the wind had risen, and the waves rolled in upon them with majestic but frightful grandeur. The little boat, too heavily laden, groaned and creaked; the sail, which Will Dennis was at a loss

how to manage for fear of upsetting the boat, now flapped and now swelled, as the wind drove her, and the waves beat her in different directions. The lads were some groaning, some crying, some swearing, and "Monkey," sobered by fright, knowing enough of God to fear Him, but not enough to love Him, sobbed and cried in his dismay. Conscience had not been altogether silenced in the wretched boy, and when he heard his companions cry out that another minute must make deadly havoc with them all, the thought of a great wrong he had committed against an innocent person swept across his soul, and the red hand of vengeance seemed about to strike.

"Oh, God!" exclaimed Frank Bellman; "I'm afraid to die. Only let me live, and I'll make it all right about Frank Drew that's in prison, because I sent him there. Oh! I'm afraid," he shrieked again, as the waves dashed the little boat about like a mere toy in a child's angry hands.

The boat struck against a rock, borne towards it by the fierce winds, and it toppled over, and the nine wretched beings it contained were struggling in the water. Struggling, screaming, shouting, and fast drowning.

All in their carelessness and sin, with the dark waters gurgling around them, striking out impotently and in vain for the help that did not come. Must these eight lads perish? And the stranger among them, who could swim a little, even he was scarcely able to keep himself alive in the raging storm.

No help! no help! Dying eyes were strained to discover aid at hand. Dying lips, which in life blasphemed Him, murmured the great Father's name as the last source of help. And the early spring night strode with giant stride over land and water, and hid the strugglers from view.

* * * * * *

"Poor fellows! We'll get them round, though."

The life-boat from Poynor's Haven had come to their rescue, and pulled the exhausted lads, one by one, into the boat. They rescued the stranger, too, who had cast in his lot with the eight; rescued "Monkey," to all appearance dead; all but poor Will Dennis, and he, the scarcely less ignorant captain of that ignorant crew, had sunk to rise no more till the "sea shall give up her dead."

Frank Bellman was so exhausted that for a long time his recovery seemed impossible; but the brave crew of the life-boat never ceased their efforts, even when they seemed useless, and at last they were rewarded by a faint movement, and then by a struggling breath in the exhausted frame.

"It's nearly like bringing the dead to life again," said the boatswain, as he wrapped "Monkey" closer in his arms, to keep the heat in him, as they pulled back to Poynor's Haven as fast as strong and willing arms could pull. And in a bed at the "Fisherman's Joy" "Monkey" was at once laid to rest, and the others were disposed of about the village, the people vying with each other in their kindness to the half-drowned, wholly worn-out creatures.

When night approached, Frank Bellman's parents were in terror concerning him. They had been to Mr. Vine's and to Annie Burnard's, to learn from the grocer that their son had left him at his usual hour in the morning, to spend the day at home, as Mr. Vine had believed, and to hear from Mrs. Burnard that he had not been at school that day, and that she had concluded he was with them, as he had been so many times of late.

"Many times, Mrs. Burnard? We *never* keep him on Sunday afternoons, do we, Bellman?" said the wife to the husband; and so the miserable truth came out that

"Monkey" had been deceiving parents and teacher. And Annie reproached herself that she had not made herself earlier acquainted with the facts of the case.

And now the lamb of her flock had strayed far away from her, perchance far also into the wilderness, and she must give an account of her shepherding. Had she been the idle, careless shepherd, resisting neither the wolf nor the bear, seeking her own ease rather than the good of the sheep?

After a terrible night of suspense, a wild, stormy night, with the wind cutting through every lattice and piercing every hole, and shrieking its cruel message of doubt in the loving ears of the father and mother, and the sensitive ones of Annie Burnard, they read the account in the papers next morning of an exciting scene at Poynor's Haven, and began to suspect that amongst the half-drowned youths poor "Monkey" might be numbered. Mr. and Mrs. Bellman lost no time in taking the steamer down the river, and they were too overjoyed for reproaches when they found their prodigal son still in bed, and not by any means recovered, in a small and poorly-furnished bedroom at the "Fisherman's Joy." And there he was compelled to remain for many days, and his mother with him. For an attack of fever followed the terrible shock and exposure, coming upon him as they did in his drunken sleep, without a moment of warning.

And in that fever he raved incessantly, with wearying persistency, of the wrong he had done to Frank Drew, and explained with strange minuteness how he had inserted the sovereign in his pocket whilst Frank leaned forward packing his basket with the parcels of groceries for his last round. Humiliation was likely to be added to the Bellmans' sorrow, but they only waited for Frank's recovery to assure themselves that he was not merely imagining the

occurrence in his delirium to inform Mr. Vine, and to have Frank Drew's case reopened.

But before this could be done, and the very day after the accident, Mr. Embleton presented himself in the evening at Rose Villa, accompanied by one of his clerks. Being at first ushered into the drawing-room, they were thence invited by Mr. Burnard himself into the cosy sitting-room, where a cheerful fire was burning, and where Annie, with Jessie by her side busily engaged in putting out a puzzle, sat at work. Mr. Embleton asked leave to introduce Mr. Wright, one of his clerks, and then said,—

"I suppose you have heard of the sad boat accident yesterday?"

"Yes, we have," said both Edward and Annie Burnard.

"Mr. Wright," said Mr. Embleton, "was in the boat with those poor lads when it occurred."

"Indeed! How did it all happen, and what sort of boys were they?" asked Annie, eagerly.

"I missed the steamer, Mrs. Burnard," said Mr. Wright, who was a tall, respectable, pale young man, and considerably paler for his yesterday's experience, "and I was extremely anxious to return last night, as I knew my mother, with whom I live, would be expecting me. I have a very dear friend over there"—Mr. Wright blushed so much, and it showed so much on his paleness, that no one could doubt of what nature the "very dear friend" was—"and I generally do spend my Sundays at Poynor's Haven at present."

"Yes," said Annie, cordially, "I see, Mr. Wright; at present you go to Poynor's Haven, by-and-by you hope to persuade your dear friend to spend her Sundays in Somerleigh with you. How frightened she must have been last night!"

Considerably relieved by Annie's quick estimate and

statement of his position, for which he thought her a "splendid sort of woman," Mr. Wright was enabled to speak freely, and to give a succinct account of his meeting with the lads, going in their boat, and encountering the storm, and of the boat's subsequent behaviour in it, and he added that amongst the boys was one called Bellman by the others.

"Do you know any one of that name?" inquired Mr. Embleton.

"Why, yes, a boy in my class is called so," said Annie, "and his parents have gone to Poynor's Haven to inquire about him."

"Did that boy have anything to do with Frank Drew?" asked the lawyer.

"Yes, they were in my class together; and besides that, Frank Bellman is apprenticed to Mr. Vine."

"Ah! Wright, that is as you thought," said Mr. Embleton. "Now go on, and tell Mrs. Burnard what he said."

The clerk proceeded with his story, and repeated "Monkey's" words in the storm, "I'll make it all right about Frank Drew that's in prison, because I sent him there."

"This is good news," said Mr. Burnard, looking almost as pleased as his wife, while Jessie looked wonderingly at one and the other, and then said,—

"Is Frank to come out, auntie? May he come away from the uncanny old prison?"

"Indeed I believe so," said Annie; "it will take a little time to get it all explained, Jessie, and then we'll fetch him out."

"Yes, yes," said Jessie, eagerly, and clapping her hands with glee; "the poor laddie will be blithe and bonnie now, auntie, will he not?"

Frank Bellman was too ill for many days to proceed with the matter, but when he had sufficiently recovered to be

brought from Poynor's Haven to his home in Somerleigh, Mr. Wright, Harry Duncan, and Mr. Vine, went together to see him. "Monkey" was completely softened; he appeared too full of thankfulness that he had escaped from the terrible death for which he felt so ill prepared, to have any wish to hide his former wickedness to Frank Drew. He told everything, how his ill-will to Frank had grown, little by little, till there wasn't, as he said, another person in the world whom he hated so much; and how he had resolved to make Mrs. Burnard change her mind about the boy whom she was so fond of, and whom she encouraged so kindly. He had himself taken the two previous sums of money which had been missed, and any one might find them in his old purse in his drawer. His mother went to it, and found the fifteen shillings, which she handed to Mr. Vine even as the boy spoke. The sovereign he had put into Frank's pocket while he was packing his basket for his last round on that Saturday evening which had brought so many people into such keen sorrow. And now he was willing to do whatever they thought right about it.

"You see," said Mr. Wright, "you are the thief, instead of Frank; it must remain for the magistrates to decide whether you shall have the same punishment as he had, and it is open to him to prosecute you or Mr. Vine for false imprisonment."

Frank Bellman stared. "I a thief!" he said.

"Of course you are in the eyes of the law."

"But I did not intend to keep a penny; I had the fifteen shillings ready, as you see, to return when Frank came out of prison."

"Nevertheless you took it," rejoined Mr. Wright, uncompromisingly, "and if Mr. Vine wishes to prosecute you, he can, on your own confession."

Frank Bellman turned away his head and groaned.

"Frank," said Mr. Vine, in his nervous but kindly way, "I am not desirous of prosecuting you; make yourself easy, I have had too much of prosecuting already in this business, and feel heartily ashamed of myself."

It was due to Mr. Vine's generosity that his wife's share in the matter was never once alluded to by him, though, as he knew well, it had been her doing, far more than his own, that proceedings were hurried on so fast.

A greater humiliation for Frank Bellman followed. All that he had said this day he had to repeat formally, and on oath, before the magistrates. And then followed the necessary red tape transactions between the Home Office and Somerleigh to rectify the blunder and reverse the decision, till Annie, and even Edward Burnard, were weary of what seemed such unnecessary and wearily protracted delays, and began to quote the caustic words of Dickens in "Little Dorrit" respecting the great Barnacle family, and their wonderful capacity for carrying out the plan of How Not to Do It.

But at last a written order came, rehearsing the whole matter from the beginning, to the jailer of Somerleigh Jail, authorizing him to release and no longer to detain the person of one Frank Drew, illegally detained therein for theft. There was no word of compensation to the injured prisoner. English justice always finds it a difficult matter to acknowledge itself in the wrong. But Frank's friends—especially the Burnards and Harry Duncan—were determined to give that publicity to the proceedings which the magistrates failed to do.

When all preparations had been made for Frank's release next day, save that Annie, with Jessie for her little handmaiden, was busy adding lovely nosegays of flowers to the tables on which the feast was spread, there came a visitor to Rose Villa. A card was brought in to Mr. Burnard with

the name upon it, "Sir William Yelland," and he rose and went to see the stranger.

"Sir," said a tall old gentleman, rising as he entered, "I am come to answer your advertisement; very late in the day, sir, I grant; but did not Shakespeare say, sir, 'Better late than never'?"

Mr. Burnard felt so excessively puzzled at this strange greeting, that he began to wonder whether his head or the visitor's was at fault.

"Three months ago"—began Sir William Yelland, and paused. That threw the necessary light on the previous words, for which Mr. Burnard had been waiting in vain, and he rejoined, "Yes, sir," and waited for more.

"You advertised for a gentleman of my description, who had given a poor boy ten shillings on a missionary-card, and subscribed himself thereon as ANON. Three months ago, sir, but I only saw the paper two months ago, for, as the immortal Shakespeare has aptly observed, 'Time and tide wait for no man;' and I am come from America to answer it, for you said it was of extreme importance to character that I should come, so come I am. Am I too late to be of use?"

"This is indeed most extraordinary," said Mr. Burnard. "Within the last week or two the matter has been cleared up, and the boy, who has been in prison all these three months, is to be set at large to-morrow."

"Three months in prison—'in durance vile,' as Shakespeare hath it—and an innocent boy! Frightful, sir, frightful! Tell me all about it."

Which Mr Burnard did, and Sir William Yelland listened with extreme interest.

"I mustn't make you believe that I came from America merely to give evidence on behalf of this poor boy," said the old gentleman; "but I came a mail earlier, that I might not *delay* to do good if opportunity offered."

Mr. Burnard thanked him warmly.

"You must let me take part in your rejoicings to-morrow," said he: "'the more the merrier, the less the better fare,' as the Great William put it. My carriage may as well go too, it will add to the show of the thing, and it is a good lesson for all the errand-boys in Somerleigh. But now what can I do for this lad? There's the making of a noble fellow in him; and we all know, for is it not written in our national poet, 'The child's the father of the man'? I am a rich man, and I am free to spend my money as I choose, for all my relatives are as well off as I am, or better. I have no family, and my wife, God bless her, has a lot of money settled on her. Tell me what I shall do for him."

"I think my wife can answer you best, Sir William."

"Your wife! what does she know about him?"

"She is his Sunday-school teacher. Her love for him and faith in him have helped much to save him from actual despair in this sad era of his history."

"Do let me see her and talk to her about him, then."

Mr. Burnard went to seek Annie. When he brought her with him, Sir William said, smiling, "Allow me to introduce myself, madam. I am Anon, the ANON of poor Frank Drew's missionary-card, who unintentionally helped to add to his trouble."

Annie smiled very sweetly as she put her hand in the one Sir William Yelland offered.

"Your good husband tells me," said he, reading as he spoke, with his quick shrewd glance, the gentle intelligent face before him, "that you can tell me how best to help this lad, for whom I feel a curious interest, and whose principles are beyond all praise. You, he says, know all the boy's highest wishes. What are they?"

"To be a missionary, sir."

"The very thing," said Sir William, emphatically; "that

is fitly connected with the mission-card too, and my first seeing him. What would you do with him; send him to college, to 'learning's seat'?"

"That is what we should like to do with him," said Annie.

"Well, Mrs. Burnard, the money is at your disposal. I am no humbug; make all inquiries about me; everybody will tell you I'm an eccentric old fellow, but no sham; and that I have a safe balance at Coutts's. Draw what you like for Frank Drew to the tune of a hundred or two a year."

"Oh! how can I thank you?" said Annie, resolving that since this new friend had arisen for Frank, the help they had intended to extend to him might be well put by to give to his mission station when opened. It was not well, for Frank's own sake, to lessen this rich gentleman's present interest in him.

"Would you mind telling me," she asked, "how you knew anything about Frank Drew?"

"Certainly not," replied Sir William; "'ask and you shall be answered,' as saith the old philosopher. I was lodging up at the top of Beechwood Terrace, on my last visit to England, as I am now, and the landlady's daughter came to me with her missionary box, and modestly asked me to drop in a small contribution. That led to a further talk, and they told me how interested the young folks in Somerleigh were in missions, and mentioned this nice errand-boy of some grocer who came up their way often, and who kept his mission-card in his pocket, and was made so happy by a donation. I met this boy with a basket of groceries; and I always like to make people happy, when I can do it without trouble to myself, so I said to myself, 'This is the one,' and made a few inquiries that convinced me of the fact; and a nice bright-faced lad he is. That is all the story, Mrs. Burnard."

"And you did not mention what you had done to your landlady?"

"No, I quite forgot to tell her I had met with him."

Two carriages with grey horses and blue postilions, as well as a handsome brougham drawn by a noble animal of a deep bay colour, drove up next morning to the Somerleigh Jail. In the first were Mr. and Mrs. Burnard, with John Drew, his wife, and their little Janie. In the second, Harry and Maggie Duncan, with Jessie; while Mr. Embleton accompanied Sir William Yelland in the brougham. They all alighted and proceeded into the entrance hall, where Frank Drew in his prison dress, with his hair cut short, met them. He was a graver, sadder Frank than of yore. The months of prison life had told painfully upon him, but his smile, when he realized the joyful news they came to tell him, eclipsed at last the bewildered surprise with which he, at first, encountered them, and the smile waxed brighter and more gladsome, and at last spread sunshine over all his face.

He was soon equipped in the neat suit of clothes which Annie Burnard, with her usual kind forethought, had supplied, and took his place beside her in the first carriage, with his parents and little sister, while Mr. Burnard joined Sir William Yelland and the lawyer. People in Somerleigh were not altogether unprepared for the event, because a paragraph headed "Triumph of Truth," descriptive of the circumstances, had appeared in the morning papers. A cheer, hearty and kind, broke from the lips of the citizens as the boy, who dared not tell a lie even to escape a prison, and braved his solitary confinement sooner than cast suspicion on another, drove along their streets.

Proceeding to Rose Villa, Frank was the happy guest at a feast prepared in his honour, at which Mr. Burnard proposed his health, and Sir William Yelland seconded it, after a cordial recognition had taken place between them. That

speech of the benevolent old man was worthy of record, but no one could do justice without hearing it to the quips and turns and allusions therein contained, in which the figures were so plentiful that they were in imminent danger of treading upon each other. Frank was the shorn Samson, who would overturn his enemies when his hair had grown again. This he deemed particularly applicable, as Frank was a water-drinker or Nazarite, as Sir William put it; "he was the innocent dove, chased by the fierce hawk; he was a Bunyan, about to commence his 'Pilgrim's Progress.'" This, in Sir William's own mind, was applicable to his proposed missionary labours, and in conclusion he said, "Ladies and gentlemen, you behold in my young friend a new Mordecai, for thus and thus shall it be done to the man whom, as Shakespeare says, the king delighteth to honour."

In the evening Frank's happy day of liberation was concluded by a prayer-meeting in Taylor Street Schoolroom, which the minister and deacons attended, where they offered heartfelt praise that their dear young brother's character had been cleared from all suspicion of blame, while they besought pardon from on High for the boy, also their scholar, who had done such a cruel wrong.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A SABBATH KINDERGARTEN.

IT was a pretty sight to see Maggie Duncan amongst her children. Maggie, with her gay lively manners, her joyous demeanour, her resolute will, made a capital mother, and the anxieties and worries of motherhood did not weigh heavily upon her. There are some women overburdened with conscientious scruples in their matronly cares; they feel as if an awful amount of condemnation would fall upon them if they forgot, or omitted, or in any way, even unintentionally, neglected one iota of their responsibilities and duties. They dwell upon the magnitude of these rather than on their joyful privileges, and they go heavily on their way in consequence. Tender mothers, loving mothers, anxious mothers these, but not the very best sort of mothers for children.

Maggie, while realizing to the full the sacred trust she held, realized yet more strongly the power of God to make His strength manifest in her weakness, and leaning on Him, with her children in her loving arms, she felt trustful and confident for them all as well as for herself. The sweet sunshine of this well-founded trust was about her constantly, and made her home a delightfully bright one. She was not a model mother, faultless and beyond all imitation; she often made blunders, she frequently spoke much too quickly, the effect of her impetuous disposition, but she was never too proud to ask forgiveness of her children if she had wronged them.

"I beg your pardon, my darling, I was altogether wrong,,

came not very unfrequently from her lips, and it never lessened her children's honour and respect for her.

A fine group these children made after seven years of Maggie's married life. There was Bertie the dreamer, Aunt May's boy, sweetly solemn, with his great thoughtful eyes and slow but affectionate ways. And next to him little dancing, effervescent, fairy-like Annie, with her laughing eyes and winsome manner, her pretty mother in miniature. Between these two, Bertie and Annie, as if one nature supplemented the other, there existed the tenderest bond of childlike union. Next was Hal, papa's namesake, the grey-eyed, fair-haired, ruddy-faced daring scapegrace, who kept his mother or his nurse busy, whenever he was near, so swift to mischief was he, though as guileless as he was bold. Freddy, with his toddling feet and sweet little two-year-old face, blue-eyed, ruddy-lipped, and lisping of utterance, came next; and then the baby, Mabel, Aunt May's namesake by Bertie's special desire, a darling just tucked, who crawled over the carpet with astounding rapidity, especially when her father was in the room, that she might catch and hold him, by the clasp of her tiny hands around his leg, whenever he came within reach; and then the little face was raised triumphantly to his, the grey eyes shone, the baby lips crowed, and all the other children laughed in sweet chorus at baby's victory.

This was the family circle that enchained Maggie to her home. The Duncans kept three servants, but this did not liberate Maggie from a great deal of the care, even of the burdensome care of her children, nor did she wish to be liberated. In the matter of "Sundays out," that dear privilege of young women in service, Maggie managed differently from most people, and for several reasons. Harry Duncan, when he married, did not abate his philanthropic labours, and however much Maggie sometimes begrudged the time they must occupy away from her, she dared not wish him to

relinquish them. For some years he had generally devoted Sunday mornings in summer, whenever the weather was favourable, to an open-air service on the quays, where he reached men who never entered a place of worship; and he held a service of precisely the same kind, only within the walls of West Lane Ragged Schoolroom, in the rough wet days and in the depth of winter.

So Maggie liberated two of her servants at these times of Harry's preaching, and stayed herself with her children, accompanying her husband to church in the evening. These mornings she strove to make some of the very happiest times of all the week to her darlings. She told them sweet Bible stories, and taught them to sing with her, dear familiar hymns. She brought Bible pictures, and educated them by eye as well as ear, and felt that such mornings, looked forward to with delight by the children, were infinitely preferable for them, and more likely to give them a real love for religion, than to take them with her to church, where they could understand but a very few words of the service, and would probably go to sleep, or be restless themselves, and annoy other folks during the sermon.

In the afternoons of Sundays, if the weather was fine, Maggie led her children into the country, attended by the nurse; the while Harry taught, as of old, in West Lane Ragged-school, amongst his "men;" for the boys had never left him, and clustered round him as affectionately as ever, for advice and instruction, every Sabbath, even now that many of them were, like himself, husbands and fathers.

In the evening, as soon as Bertie was old enough to understand something of what he heard, he usually went to church with his parents, esteeming it a delight and a privilege.

"Harry," said Maggie, one evening about this time, "I have been thinking I might try to do a little good."

"I am glad to hear it," said Harry, laughing, "especially as my dear wife, with our flock of five, has at present so few opportunities of accomplishing anything worth doing."

"Our flock, as you call them, saucy husband, is to be my foundation-stone, or rather my nucleus, or rather my original stock of plants."

"Speak plainly, dear Maggie, for I am not a man of brilliant parts, and never could comprehend riddles. What are you going to do?"

"How humble-minded we are," said Maggie, gaily, "especially when we are a little bit lazy, and a little bit curious, and don't want to worry ourselves."

She was sitting by her husband near the open window that led into the balcony full of flowers, whose sweet fragrance filled the room. He was lying on a luxurious couch, soft and downy, and eminently restful, which had been her gift to him, and she sat on a low chair beside him at work for one of their children, where his hand could rest upon her shoulder, and where a sentence might, if occasion required, be emphasized or punctuated by a kiss. For these two, in all their happy years of married life, had never thought of leaving off, when alone, those endearments which some folks deem only suitable for courting days. They saw, as both of them declared, so little of each other, that when they could get a quiet hour of chat, it was prized as much, nay, far more, than those fugitive meetings in bygone years, when Maggie Griffiths certainly did not so fully comprehend what made her like to talk to Harry Duncan.

"Why don't you expound to me your plans, dearest?" said Harry, after a pause, in which he had been lying still, looking at her with a peaceful happy sense of their mutual love permeating his very nature like an atmosphere of

golden glory; "what is the extra good you are about to do? Dear child, you seem to me to have been doing nothing but good these many years."

"Partial man," said Maggie, turning her face to his and kissing him, "I have been thinking of utilizing my Sunday mornings. While you are doing so much for God, Harry," she said, softly and seriously, "I do so little."

"My dear Maggie, do not say so. We none of us do enough, but the mother of a family, who conscientiously tries to educate them in the ways of holiness, is doing one of the very grandest works for God that can be accomplished. My little labours sink into insignificance when compared with yours. But how can you make your Sunday mornings more useful, Maggie?"

"I will tell you what made me first think of it, Harry. You know those nice shops down Eglinton Road?"

"Which you are so fond of patronizing?" laughingly inquired Harry.

"Well, dear, it is very convenient, I assure you, not to have to send into Somerleigh proper for quite everything I want. The person at the haberdasher's shop, Mrs. Lee, has been telling me what difficulties she has in the way of getting out on Sundays; you know she has four little ones."

"I did *not* know it, Maggie," said Harry, drily.

"Well then, I will inform you," returned Maggie, inflicting a small chastisement for his impertinence. "I was asking her if she heard the Bishop when he preached at St. David's, and then she told me that she really could not get out either morning or evening. They only keep one young servant; of course the girl expects her evening out, and in the morning she has too much else to do for Mrs. Lee to leave her little ones comfortably with her, and there is only one big enough to take to church."

"So you are going to have hers with ours in the morning,

and set her free to go to a place of worship," said Harry. "Well done, dear wife."

"That is not all," said Maggie; "if I can do it for one overburdened mother, why not for three or four; why should I not establish a Sabbath kindergarten? I am sure I can make them happy."

"I have no doubt of that. But won't you find it very tiring and exhausting?"

"Oh, no! not much more fatiguing to take care of twenty than five; and then I should, I hope, be doing real good."

"God bless you, dear wife," said Harry, kissing her, "I admire and approve your scheme. 'Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.' How would it do to get that pretty little Flower of the Grassmarket to grow in your Sabbath garden?"

"Oh! I never thought of that," said Maggie, with animation; "I am so glad it came into your head. Jessie would be of great service to me, if Edward and Annie will spare her. But I can hardly expect them to. What a sweet lovely girl she grows."

"Yes, their adopting her was a kind deed, which has borne sweet fruit," replied Harry.

"A great deal is often urged about ingratitude," said Maggie, "but for my part I think people are mostly grateful. Look at Jessie; she never seems as if she could do enough for her uncle and aunt. And then there is Frank Drew, what a splendid young fellow he makes, so simple, so clever, and so intensely grateful to all those who have helped him. Harry, when you rescued John Drew from the career of a drunkard by the temperance pledge, you began a greater work than you knew of. Neither Frank, nor his father and mother, will ever forget it."

"Nor will Maggie Duncan," said her husband, playfully

patting her cheek. "But you must not be too sanguine, Maggie; some people *do* show ingratitude, but I think with you there is less of it than some people say. When ingratitude *is* shown, it is sometimes because a favour is given so *unfavourably* that it would be impossible for the recipient to feel thankful."

Maggie, her scheme thus encouraged and approved of, called next day on Mrs. Lee, and invited her to send her four children to her at ten o'clock next Sabbath morning to be taught with her own children, in her kindergarten. After thanking her very heartily, Mrs. Lee said,—

"Kindergarten! I have heard that word often, Mrs. Duncan; will you kindly tell me what it means?"

And Maggie explained that it meant "children's garden," and was intended to designate a mode of teaching which might fitly be compared to bringing the sunshine, and the pure water, and the fitting soil, around the human plants.

"I mean to train my kindergarten flowers," she said, "to turn their little faces to the glorious Sun of Righteousness, to rejoice in His beams, and spread their petals in His sunshine; I believe that He will shower down upon them the living waters, and bring up upon them the refreshing 'dews of His grace;' and that 'instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree, and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.' I believe that God will keep His promise even in this little kindergarten; that He will, as He says, 'pour My Spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thine offspring, and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses. One shall say, I am the Lord's, and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel.' Those are the results we hope for, Mrs. Lee, even though it be

'after many days,' that our children shall be as fair as cedars of Lebanon, 'trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified.'"

"You have very strong faith, Mrs. Duncan," said Mrs. Lee.

"Why should I not?" she answered cheerfully, "'in the Lord is my strength.'"

"Annie," said Maggie, when she reached Rose Villa, "can you spare Jessie to me every Sunday morning?"

"You find the children too much for you, then, Maggie? Don't you think you had better alter your plans?"

"I am going to, in this way," said Maggie, "that I have made up my mind to relieve a few other mothers of their little ones on Sunday mornings, to have a children's service of praise to God. An infant Lobgesang, dearest Annie, in our home every Sabbath. Children should be like the angels and the birds, they should have songs of praise ever on their lips; I want to teach them this. And I want Jessie to come and help me in thus singing for Jesus."

"Dear Maggie," said Annie, "it is a beautiful thought, like your own kind self. Whose children are you to have?"

"Only the little Lees and Bakers, so far as I know at present; but I quite expect, when it is known, that there are other mothers in just the same circumstances, who will thankfully send their darlings to me."

"There is poor Mrs. Tunstall," said Annie, "will you let me speak on her behalf. She has a sick husband, and I know she often longs to sit quietly with him on the Sunday, but it is impossible, her three boys are so spirited, though they are only little fellows. Once or twice I have sent Jessie to help her, and occasionally have let her bring the children here and take care of them while we were at chapel, to give their poor mother and father a few quiet hours."

"Could not Jessie bring them to me?" asked Maggie.

"An excellent thought; of course she could. Oh, this will be a relief to that poor creature! I have so pitied her, Maggie, yet I did not see, till you suggested it, how much could be done to help her."

"Then you will let Jessie come?"

"Yes, if Edward has no objection. It will be a real giving up to him to spare her, though."

"But she can go with you in the evening."

"Yes; and Mrs. Tyndall is glad for her to engage in any Christian work, and will, I am sure, approve. I think sometimes," said Annie, "that for want of sufficient energy to strike out into fresh fields of usefulness, we often miss golden opportunities of doing good. You have so much more of that energy, and originality, and quick thought, than I have."

"I must quote to you, Annie, what Harry has been quoting to me of late, the text which tells us that those 'who compare themselves among themselves are not wise.' There is only One, as Harry often says, to whose standard we may profitably bring our works, and then we should find out how humble they should make us, even the best of them. What news of the student?"

"He comes to us next month for his holidays. He will very soon be ordained now, and he looks forward to go to his post of labour in the spring."

Maggie was right. No sooner was her Sabbath kindergarten well established, and well known, than she had many more applications to take additional children into it than she could possibly entertain.

"For my rooms are limited in size," she said, "and if we breathe poisonous air in them my plants will fade, and droop, and die."

So all but the most urgent cases were positively refused, and even then she and Jessie were busy amongst twenty-

five little ones every Sabbath morning. And through the lovely weeks of summer the kindergarten was held in the pretty summer-house of the No. 7, Eglinton Terrace garden, whence arose sweet child voices in simple words of praise, where little hands were folded and baby heads bent, while in simplest language, which her motherhood brought ready to her lips, Maggie prayed such prayers for them as they themselves could understand and join in; nor was it at all unfrequent for some child voice itself to tell the great and good Father of them all of their wishes and wants.

Very often, indeed, flowers, and insects, and caterpillars, and beetles, were used in Maggie's lessons, and the birds that sported on the boughs, and the butterflies that flitted amongst the flowers, were illustrations for her words. Maggie longed to make all these children kind and tender to God's creation—careful of His beings from the least to the greatest. It was a fair picture, these golden, and brown, and flaxen, and black haired children's heads all bent in earnest attention over the dissected petals and stamens of a flower whose beauties Maggie pointed out, and whose uses she explained. Then they gathered close round her and Jessie for Bible stories; they wrote and printed Bible texts and verses of hymns upon their slates, and drew pictures of Bible animals and flowers; and so they struggled bravely, helped by loving hands and encouraged by kind voices, up the steep pathways of knowledge, which for these happy little ones led through the flowery lands of love.

Jessie Burnard, now a flaxen-haired, blue-eyed, and gentle-faced girl of fifteen, was in her element in Aunt Maggie's kindergarten, and bloomed the fairest flower of all.

CHAPTER XXVII.

MRS. VINE MAKES THE "AMENDE HONORABLE."

FRANK DREW may be excused if, after the strong suspicion on her part, which had cost him so dear, he had not any very great cordiality of feeling towards Mrs. Vine. There are some people in the world towards whom our hearts are drawn out quite naturally, whom we find it indeed impossible to help liking; it is pleasant to us to be in their society, their countenances are agreeable and attractive to us. There are others whom, try hard as we will, we cannot like, who repel us by their every word, and look, and tone.

When Frank was free from his imprisonment, before he entered on the student-life, which almost immediately commenced for him, through the liberality of Sir William Yelland, he received a good many invitations. Two of these he very speedily declined. One was from "Monkey," the other from Mr. and Mrs. Vine. Without wishing to feel uncharitably towards any one, Frank was too honest to pretend a cordiality which did not exist. Mr. Vine had waited upon Frank in his own home, and asked his forgiveness and apologised to him with heartiness and kindness. He had offered to take him back, not as an errand-boy, but to give him his indentures as an apprentice, if he were still inclined to follow the business, of which he had already some knowledge. Frank thanked him very sincerely, accepted his friendship, but declined his offer and told him his plans. He knew well that his old master had been only induced to believe evil of him by the machinations of others.

In the years that elapsed between Frank's sixteenth and

twenty-second birthday, all which time had been devoted to his education and preparation for his missionary labours, there had been a good many changes in the Vine, and Bellman, and Drew families, which may be thus summed up. John Drew had become timekeeper at Messrs. Burnard and Duncan's foundry, and lived in a respectable house near it in a quiet back street of Somerleigh. Mrs. Drew let a part of this house to a lodger, who, like the house, was thoroughly respectable; Janie, now a pleasant well-behaved little girl of ten, went to a good school, and helped her mother between times, and circumstances were easier than they had ever been before to the whole family.

Mrs. Vine had in these six years been made quite easy with regard to the position of the business and the helpless little daughters, by the arrival of three "props" in succession, fine boys who quite eclipsed their puny sisters in bulk and general appearance. Mr. Vine's business had prospered to so great a degree that Mrs. Vine often amused herself in her melancholy manner by allotting to each son, when grown up to years of sufficient discretion, various portions and branches of the trade, and congratulated her husband—if that could be called a congratulation which was spoken dolefully—on the prospect of his being able to do away in after years with all assistance save that of his children. An economical and highly advantageous proposal to her own mind, which Mr. Vine was but slow to appreciate. "Time enough, my dear, time enough," said he; "all our boys may not wish to be grocers."

Mr. Bellman, too, had prospered considerably. The whole of the business house was now occupied by his multifarious stores, and the family had removed to one of a neat row of houses in the outskirts of Somerleigh, from and to which Mr. Bellman proceeded morning and evening in a tramway-car. Frank Bellman—and with the cessation of his

more actively mischievous propensities we will drop his nickname of "Monkey"—had become one of the most elaborately foppish young men in Somerleigh, and directly his apprenticeship had expired, a period now close at hand, he was to join his father in his lucrative business.

With regard to Frank Bellman, Mrs. Vine—who, it will be remembered, always evinced a partiality for him—declared to her husband that she "had views." But not even to the father of those three "props" of the house of Vine would she make a full and explicit declaration as to what those "views" were. But if mysterious pointings of fingers and dark hints at "names," and "early loves," and "my eldest daughter," and "pining in secret," meant anything at all, they probably meant that Mrs. Vine would try to make a match between Miss Arabella Vine, now aged seventeen, and very much indeed of a young woman, except that she was not truly womanly, and Mr. Frank Bellman.

But Arabella, with all the proverbial perverseness, and a good deal too little of the modesty of her sex, declared to her mother that "she wouldn't give a fig for that stuck-up young Bellman." All Frank Bellman's collars and cravats, his elaborate sticks and expensive cigars, being utterly thrown away upon the wilful girl. And she owned—what was far more alarming to Mrs. Vine—that the only fellow she had ever seen worth looking at was young Frank Drew. If her mother liked to introduce her to him, why, that would be something worth thinking about. Mrs. Vine suggested the fact that he was to become a missionary and to go amongst the blacks, who, she declared pathetically, were all cannibals, and would be sure to eat him up first thing, a declaration which neither daunted Miss Arabella nor proved her mother's knowledge of the habits of other nations.

"I think you might as well ask him here, mother," said Arabella, somewhat bitterly, "if it was only to please me;

I don't get so very many pleasures that you need begrudge and refuse me this one."

"But he isn't friendly with us, you know, Arabella," suggested Mrs. Vine.

"No, because you stick yourself away from him, mother; he is always quite pleasant with father. You should come forward and speak to him, and ask him to tea. The students will be home by next Sunday. I'll make some cakes on Saturday, and father can ask him for Monday or Tuesday."

Frank Drew made his appearance in Taylor Street Chapel on Sunday, as Miss Arabella Vine had foreseen; but he sat in Mr. Burnard's pew, between Mrs. Burnard and Jessie, to the extreme mortification of Mrs. Vine's eldest daughter. Mr. Burnard had bespoken a holiday from the kindergarten for Jessie while Frank was with them. The next few weeks was a very happy time to them all. Annie Burnard thought much of the speedy exile of Frank from his native land in God's service, and she wished him to have many cheerful and "sunny memories" to look back upon in his solitude. She therefore improvised during his holiday a succession of delightful excursions and picnics, which generally included Harry and Maggie Duncan, and their little son Bertie, and, as often as possible, Frank's mother and sister. A week or two was spent by the Rose Villa household, including their guest, amongst the lovely and romantic scenery of North Wales, a trip down the Wye and to Tintern Abbey ending that pleasant fortnight.

Frank and Jessie, like brother and sister, rambled amongst the valleys and mountains, Frank's strong arm ever ready to help her in climbing the hills and crossing the fords of the rocky rivers. Jessie's blue eyes were turned to his in grateful thanks for his services; and trustfully in her simple child-like fashion she confided to him her thoughts,

and hopes, and plans of action. In less than a year she must leave her dear Mrs. Tyndall's class and become a teacher herself, and she asked his counsel and stated her fears as naturally as to a kind brother. She also described to him Aunt Maggie's kindergarten, and made him laugh merrily at her droll anecdotes of the tiny flowers which grew therein.

"Aunt Maggie," she said, "is a wise and bonnie gardener, and makes them all bloom so fair and sweet."

And Frank, on his part, told Jessie of his future. He was, at first, to proceed to a station in South Africa, where the missionary was in ill-health and sadly needed help, to remain there a year or two, learning the language and teaching in the schools. He meant to work so hard, to learn as soon as possible to talk to the natives in their own tongue, and he hoped after a while to be able to establish a new station and to bring in fresh tribes to the knowledge of God. He had so many missionary stories to tell her, and such a warm, loving, enthusiastic way of telling them, that Jessie was never weary of listening.

"I would like to be a missionary too, Frank," she said one day, "only I will be one in England, among our own poor heathen, for I cannot leave uncle and auntie."

When Mr. Vine, on the first Sunday of Frank's visit, invited him, in obedience to the wishes of his wife and daughter, to spend an evening with them whilst he was in Somerleigh, and named either of the following two days as being suitable, the young man pleaded that previous engagements would prevent his coming for a week or two, but he would certainly accept their hospitality before he left. The thought of so soon leaving his native shores softened Frank's feelings to all his countrymen and countrywomen, and he had no wish to leave a single enemy behind him.

He was amused on entering the drawing-room of the

Vines, a large, well-furnished room over the shop, to find in what elaborate style they had prepared for his reception. It is always curious to observe the results of the different estimation in which people hold you when your circumstances have by any chance become considerably improved.

Frank Bellman was faultlessly attired, and if he could have forgotten that fact, might have been sufficiently agreeable. The rest of the Bellmans, father, mother, and two daughters, had put on company-clothes and manners. Miss Arabella was gorgeous in a crimson silk and massively-arranged head-gear surrounded by an enormous comb. Her sisters were likewise in silks of various rainbow hues, making their flabby complexions still more noticeable; the three "props," curled and combed and brushed to the last degree of perfection, were sumptuously apparelled in black velvet tunics, the two elder ones with knickerbockers to match. Mr. Stapleton alone seemed to Frank's mind unaltered, and the same kind-hearted agreeable man as ever. For even Mr. Vine had changed by growing stout, though he was like his old self, nervous and bustling.

"So you are going to Africa, Mr. Drew? Oh!" Arabella added, with playful vivacity, "I *can't* call you Mr. Drew, it's no use, I *must* call you Frank; why you used to be Frank, you know, and you used to play with me. Oh, my! it was very nice of you, and I know I liked it very much. Do you remember our games together?"

"My *dear* Arabella," said Mrs. Vine, in her accustomed melancholy tone, as she presided in very upright fashion behind the tea-urn, in an extremely rich black silk; "it is *not* likely that Mr. Drew remembers anything of the kind, and you should not tease him with questions."

"I don't tease him, mamma; do I, Frank?" she asked, in her most bewitching manner.

"Certainly not," answered Frank, politely; "but I don't

remember the plays you allude to, I think it must have been Frank Bellman who was so happily honoured."

"Oh, no, I recollect it quite well," said Arabella; "it was generally hide and seek; you were so clever at it."

"So you are going to Africa, sir," remarked Mr. Bellman, in whom prosperity had developed a pompous manner, which was in excellent keeping with his "loud" style of dress, his broad good-tempered face, and his expansive person. "To Africa, sir," he repeated; "and what may your work be there, sir? In what department of the mission field, I would ask, will you at first labour on your arrival?"

"I shall be busily engaged in studying the language, and as I am able shall assist in Sunday-school work, and help the present missionary there, Mr. Matthews, in preaching and all his other duties."

"I see, sir, I see," said Mr. Bellman.

"Sunday-school work," repeated Mrs. Vine, solemnly; "there, Arabella, to think of Mr. Drew leaving home, and kindred, and native land to undertake work in a Sunday-school of poor black children, and you won't even stir yourself to walk out from your father's house to teach in Taylor Street school of whites, where so many ladies and gentlemen do teach."

"Are you not a Sunday-school teacher, Miss Vine?" said Frank Drew.

"No, Frank; do you think I ought to be?" She blushed a little as she thus addressed him, and tried very much to look arch and pretty. But as an arch glance and a pretty face are not to be had for trying, but come naturally, if at all, Miss Arabella woefully failed.

"I am not your mentor, Miss Vine," said Frank, pleasantly; "but I think a young man or woman who has leisure on the Sabbath cannot do better than employ some of it in teaching."

"Lucinda teaches an infant class," said Aral
ing with more approval than usual at her you
"but then, dear me, there always seems enougl
do at home."

"Why, Arabella, you lie on your bed Sunday
and go to sleep," said Prop No. 1; "you know

"Naughty boy, how can you say such things,

"My dears, be quiet," said Mr. Vine, fussily; '
either agreeable or profitable conversation."

"Are you not afraid of being eaten by the c
remarked Mrs. Vine, a shade more cheerfully tha

Dismal subjects seemed to possess the una
power of raising Mrs. Vine's spirits, as cheerfu
pressed them.

"Oh, no," said Frank, "the tribes amongst wi
labour are not cannibals."

"Not cannibals?" Mrs. Vine was rather di
than otherwise.

"Certainly not," said Frank; "at all events,
whom I go to at first."

"And you'll live in a kraal, I believe," said
man, a very mild woman, who always expressed l
doubtfully.

"A kraal is a native village," replied Frank;
is the mission station—church, school-house, an
ary's residence—are at some little distance from

"I should dearly love to be a missionary," sai
with warmth.

"My dear, you had better put yourself in tra
missionary's wife," said Mr. Bellman, with uncti
touch of ponderous playfulness in his rounded t
that end you had best take a class at Taylor S
Kedstone, I hear they are asking for teachers t
then if Mr. Frank Drew should happen to m

brother missionary in want of a wife, he can recommend you—eh, Mr. Frank? Ha! ha!" And, much pleased with the "neat way" in which he had put the thing, Mr. Bellman laughed so comfortably that all at the table laughed with him by irresistible attraction.

"It's a hard lot, the lot of a missionary, don't you think so?" said doubtful Mrs. Bellman. She did not address any one in particular. But Frank answered her.

"Hard, perhaps, in many respects, Mrs. Bellman," he said, his face kindling; "but it is a glorious privilege to carry the 'good news' to them 'that sit in darkness,' and unfurl the spotless banner of Christ to the eyes that have been looking so long for His salvation."

"You are to be ordained in London, Frank?" asked Mr. Vine.

"Yes, sir," said Frank, "along with five other young men missionaries to various parts of the world."

"Now, that," said Mr. Bellman, "will be what I should call an impressive service. It would be a service, Mr. Frank, in which I should feel a particular interest, and which I should uncommonly like to attend; you, as you know, we feel to be one of ourselves, a scholar in Taylor Street, a teacher for a while in Taylor Street."

"No, sir, I never began to teach there."

"No, to be sure, you went to the college, didn't you, after—after—"

Mr. Bellman struggled and fumed in fruitless efforts to get out of the awkward recollections which he had called up in this untimely fashion. He struggled so much as to become painfully red in the face, and awaken his wife's anxiety.

"Never mind, Joseph; we know, don't we? Nothing more need be said, need there?"

Frank came to the rescue of the embarrassed Mr. Bellman.

"I pray you don't trouble on my account, sir," said Frank;

"you mean after I came out of prison. To have been in a prison is no disgrace, unless you are confined therein through a crime or a misdeed. You do not pain me, sir."

"Thank you, thank you, Mr. Frank, that is very handsome of you," said Mr. Bellman, regaining his composure by slow degrees.

"Now we are on that topic, Mr. Drew," said Mrs. Vine, in her melodramatic style, "allow me to say what I wish to say, what I feel I ought to say, and yet what, if it had not been for Mr. Bellman's opening the subject, I perhaps might never have said."

Frank turned to her politely, waiting for her to say more. Frank Bellman twitched his collar, and pulled his young moustache nervously, and wished himself anywhere but in the present company.

"And that is," continued Mrs. Vine, "that I'm very sorry for what I did at that time, and I wish I hadn't done it. But I never knew marked money to fail, save that once."

"Thank you, Mrs. Vine," said Frank; "I am glad you have said this. And now shall we let bygones be bygones, and say no more at all on the subject? Mr. Bellman, you were talking about the ordination service."

"So I was," said Mr. Bellman, "and wishing, Mr. Frank, that I could attend it. But business, you know, business, Mr. Frank; it isn't always that a man can leave it and run up to London."

"Certainly not," replied Frank.

"Shall we have a little music?" said Mrs. Vine, in her most doleful voice; "they tell me Arabella plays well, and Miss Bellman is, I know, quite a proficient."

Frank Drew welcomed the suggestion, for the conversation had been somewhat too personal throughout to be pleasant. The piano, a very fine one, made an admirable diversion. The Misses Bellman played duets, and Miss

Arabella executed a "brilliant piece," and then favoured the party with a song, accompanied on the piano by her sister Lucinda—a song which, Frank thought, with an amused smile on his lips the while, might have been written in that African language he was about to study, so far as the words reached him. He was asked to sing, and complied with the invitation, provided he might be allowed to sing a song which some would call a hymn, for it was almost the only one the words of which he could remember.

"Quite appropriate and proper," remarked Mr. Bellman, who relished in a comfortable, pious manner, anything which seemed suggestive of "improving the occasion." Mr. Bellman was a really good man, judged by that difficult standard, stern, unflinching uprightness in all business transactions, and the little shade of sanctimoniousness which frequently marred his manners had at least a substantial background of solid principle which almost neutralised its evil effect.

Frank sang one of the "Singing Pilgrim" Philip Phillips's pieces, which was endeared to him by association, for it was a favourite of Annie Burnard's, and had been taught to him by her and Jessie, during his pleasant visit. It was entitled "Your Mission." The verses are all beautiful, with a picture in each worthy of some great artist; but Frank's voice lingered lovingly over this one, for Jessie had told him he would recall the verse in Africa, after he had forgotten who first sang it to him:—

"If you are too weak to journey
  Up the mountain, steep and high,
You can stand within the valley
  While the multitudes go by;
You can chant in happy measure
  As they slowly pass along;
Though they may forget the singer,
  They will not forget the song."

And his earnest soul swelled out eagerly through the music of the last verse :—

"Do not, then, stand idly waiting
For some greater work to do ;
Oh, improve each passing moment,
For these moments may be few.
Go and toil in any vineyard,
Do not fear to do or dare ;
If you want a field of labour
You can find it anywhere."

As Frank finished singing, he thought curiously of the change since the days of his carrying out Mr. Vine's groceries, when he had looked up with admiration at the lights shining in the three windows of the drawing-room in which Mr. and Mrs. Vine entertained their company. After supper, he bade them all good-night, and returned to Rose Villa with a sense of satisfaction that the visit was paid.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

SOUTHWARD HO!

THE first time that the Flower of the Grassmarket found herself in the great English metropolis was on the occasion of Frank's ordination. The large chapel in which the six young men dedicated themselves to the work of foreign evangelization was crowded. Nothing could be more solemn, Jessie thought, than the whole scene. The missionaries were surrounded on the platform—for, happily, this chapel had been more sensibly built than to possess a pulpit—by various ministers of note in the various churches connected with the London Missionary Society, and the addresses of some of these to their younger brethren were extremely beautiful. In language tender and strong they spoke to them of their duties. They reminded them of the love that would accompany them from English homes, and of that higher, better Love, which never could forget them, in circumstances the most difficult, in dangers the most perilous. Gravely they besought them to preach *faithfully* —to hold up before the people neither Paul nor Apollos, but Christ, simply and plainly. To preach the Word with boldness and wisdom; to "be wise as serpents, harmless as doves."

Jessie sat between her uncle and aunt, and drank in every word. After it was over Frank came to them, his face flushed with excitement, his eyes bright and glistening with unshed tears, his tongue faltering with strong emotion. And Annie gazed with loving, blameless pride upon her missionary scholar, chosen of God from out her class, to work for Him in a heathen land. But she did not realize, as Frank

himself did, how much he owed to the Sunday
Harry Duncan had first aroused his moral se
she had by God's grace kept it alive, strengthe
it yearn for higher satisfaction than earthly
yield, and had pointed him to the Well of L
which could so slake his thirst that he need onl
to be for ever satisfied.

Beside Mr. Burnard sat Sir William Yelland
a child at every pathetic word that fell from
speakers, and most of all, when Frank declared
of his early dedication to the work, and how,
had not known, God, who had accepted his hum
had enabled him to obtain the necessary educ
work.

And now he shook Frank continuously by th
gazed at his young bright face, and thanked
heart that he had been able to help the boy.

"You must all come and dine with me to-m
he, as Frank assisted his now feeble steps to
the others following. "Lady Yelland will be
to see you; she knows Frank, and she would l
Frank's friends. You must be sure to come,
I depend on you to bring uncle and aunt."

"You need not charge me to bring them, S
said Jessie, prettily, "they'll want to come them

Lady Yelland was a dark-eyed, dark-comple
cious little lady, fond of society, and by no mea
to extend her acquaintance. Frank was alread
with her; he had spent several weeks at va
during his studentship with his kind patron, a
comed them all very cordially now. The Yella
residences, one a pretty west-end house, overlo
Park, the other a snug estate called Yelland,
shire, on which Sir William lived most of his tin

indulged in amateur farming and various other hobbies. He had held office under Government for several years in the colonies, and was almost as much at home in certain parts of Australia as in England.

"Well, Frank," said he, next day at table, "'all's well that ends well,' as the sweet Bard of Avon puts it. Your college life has been creditable to you and a pleasure to me, and now, though it's ended well, I don't half like to think that it is over, and that we shan't have a visit every now and again from you in the future as we have had. But I mustn't forget that the immortal William has also said, 'The best of friends must part,' and I like to think, Frank, that we do part the best of friends."

Lady Yelland was too wise a woman to dispute the accuracy of any of the many quotations which her husband without due authority put to the account of William Shakespeare, but she was observed not unfrequently at such times to raise her shoulders with an irrepressible shrug worthy of a Frenchwoman, and to lift her eyebrows in harmony therewith.

The evening being very fine, balmy with the first warmth of spring, Sir William insisted that the young folks should take advantage of it to have a stroll in the park, and nothing loth, Frank introduced Jessie to the beauties of a London park in spring. The Serpentine gleaming in the rays of the setting sun, the trees just donning their early and exquisite greenness, and the gay promenaders, made a pretty picture, and over it all was the soft sad thought of approaching separation from all this English loveliness which endeared it to Frank's mind more than he could have expressed.

"What a long time it will be, Jessie," said he, "before I see again the fresh delicate green of our springs. How often amidst luxuriant foliage and superabundant vegetation such scenes as this will rise to memory, refreshing as a soft cool hand on a burning forehead."

"You will write and tell me all about everything, won't you, Frank?" said Jessie, "and I will keep you well informed of all things at home; I have adopted you for my brother, you know, so you will not disappoint me, Frank. Auntie says there are many things we can do for you, and she expects for the people also at your station. How I will enjoy to buy a lot of smart gay prints, and make frocks for prizes for your school-children. I mean to commence almost as soon as you are gone and get a good store."

Frank laughed. "Are you going to bribe them to come to school in that fashion, Jessie? But I shall be more prudent and careful of your gifts, for I can't expect you to go on working for me and my black folks very long."

"Why will I not?" asked Jessie, innocently raising her sweet eyes to his face.

"Because, my sister," said Frank, affectionately, "you will have other work to do, other people to care for, other duties to call upon your time and labour. It is natural and very kind of you, dear Jessie, to think a great deal about me now that we have been so much together, and you have taken such an interest in all that concerns me, but after a time this interest will weaken, and I must expect it to."

"It grieves me that you will think so," said Jessie, looking at him again, this time with tears on the long dark fringes that shaded, but could not hide, the brightness and beauty of her blue eyes.

"I will not grieve you, Jessie, if I can help it," said Frank, gently, smilingly repeating her words, but secretly much moved at the depth of feeling she evinced; "I will believe that the stock of prints is unlimited," he added, laughing, "and that my sister will always be willing to make prizes for my good scholars."

Jessie laughed merrily as he said this. Soon she pro-

posed that they should turn back to Sir William's, and Frank half reluctantly consented.

"Whenever you are short of cash, Frank," said the good old man at parting, "you know there's my balance to draw upon. Don't forget Shakespeare's axiom, 'A friend in need is a friend indeed,' which is every whit as true now as it was three centuries ago, in his day. For the present needs take this," and he pushed a full purse into the young missionary's hand.

"I cannot, I cannot," said Frank, "I have already received so much help, so much kindness."

"Is that any reason, supposing it were true, why I should be deprived of the pleasure of doing a little more?" said Sir William, playfully. "Good-bye, Frank, good-bye; be sure to come and see me directly you return to England; remember that's a promise, and write to me before you go. God bless you, my boy, God bless you."

Frank embraced the old man tenderly at parting, and tried, but in vain, to speak the thanks he felt.

A few hurried days of packing and leave-taking at Somerleigh, and then Frank, still accompanied by the Burnards and Jessie, and this time by his parents and little sister also, set out for Southampton. They all saw him on board the Cape mail, a fine handsome vessel, in which his accommodation was everything that could be wished. But not until now did Mrs. Drew, Frank's good kind mother, who had so rejoiced in his upward progress, realize the full extent of the terrible parting which she must endure for so many years from her beloved son. And not until those last few hours did Frank comprehend how much his heart clung to the little group by whom he was surrounded. He strained his eyes to follow them as they left the ship, and the last objects he saw were Jessie's waving flaxen hair, and the black shawl worn by his mother. Then tears filled his eyes, and sorrow clouded his heart.

And the great ship steamed away along the sunny waters of the Channel, putting into Plymouth for a few hours, which enabled Frank to send ashore last letters to Somerleigh, and then away again, southward bound! The dream of his boyhood realized, and he a missionary.

After a quick and prosperous voyage, Frank landed at the Cape, and with but very little delay pushed his way on to the mission station, to find Mr. Matthews stretched on his bed with fever, and his overburdened wife most thankfully waiting to welcome the stranger to their relief and assistance. For the first few weeks Frank was more of a nurse than a missionary, save that he kept the accounts of the station for Mrs. Matthews. And after that, when the missionary had recovered, he was himself smitten by illness, which in his case they called the fever of acclimatization. They took kind care of him, for he had won their hearts by his devotion to Mr. Matthews on his arrival; but it was quite impossible that the missionary's wife, with her own three children, and her house, and so much mission work as she had to at tend to, could be with him often in his illness, and he longed for his mother to nurse him, and for his new sister, Jessie, to sit by him, to sing to him, and to hand him the cool fruits which his parched lips constantly thirsted for.

But no sooner had he recovered than he entered into his labours with avidity. By every means in his power he sought to grasp the language, that he might teach and preach his message to the people. He was frequently in the school, where, by listening and speaking to the children, he made the more rapid progress. He was soon a favourite amongst these little ones, who were themselves learning English, and whom he encouraged to talk to him, and to tell him their names of things, by which means he speedily mastered the nouns of the language. How pleasant it was

to hear the old familiar hymn tunes of Taylor Street School sung by these children, with their rich melodious voices, their intelligent black faces beaming with pleasure at the sweet sounds, for they were extremely sensitive to music.

His first prayer, his first sermon in that African tongue! He felt, as he uttered them with deep thankfulness to God, that he now possessed the key to unlock many a heart.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A BIRTHDAY SORROW.

JESSIE was eighteen. Swift time worked an unconscious change in her, and she was a child no longer. She had passed over the bridge without knowing it, and a woman's duties lay before her. She had not left Mrs. Tyndall's class when she was sixteen, for taking into account the young girl's work in her Aunt Maggie's kindergarten every Sabbath morning, and listening to her earnest entreaties to remain, and listening also to the promptings of her own heart—for she had grown excessively fond of Jessie—that lady had not yet been able to make up her mind that the young Scotch lassie must go.

It was Jessie's eighteenth birthday, a golden autumn day, when she walked to Taylor Street on the arm of her uncle, her aunt upon his other side. He always insisted that Jessie's birthdays, whether they occurred on Sundays or week-days, should be spent altogether at home. A strange feeling of something being the matter—that mental prescience which is familiar to most of us—came over Edward and Annie Burnard as well as Jessie when they entered the chapel. The pew-openers, naturally quiet and almost stealthy in their manner, were quieter and more stealthy this morning. Jessie glanced nervously around. What was it? The chapel was fast filling, and yet many seats were empty. What was it that made her watch, and watch in vain, for the filling of the Tyndalls' pews?

"Auntie, there must be something the matter, none of the Tyndalls are here," she whispered; "oh, I hope dear Mrs. Tyndall is not ill."

"My dear child, it is not at all late, they may come yet, don't alarm yourself."

But the minister went up into his pulpit, and still that seat was ominously empty. After kneeling for a few moments in silent supplication, he arose and said :—

"My dear friends, I cannot commence this service without alluding to the very solemn intelligence which has been brought to me, and which I am requested to make known to you. 'A mother in Israel' has fallen. Fallen, did I say? Nay, rather, has risen. 'A mother in Israel' has been called up higher. Peacefully as a little child goes to sleep in its mother's arms, our beloved sister, Eleanor Tyndall, rests in Jesus. Her daughter-in-law went to call her this morning, and found her, as she believed, asleep, so peacefully, so restfully, did she lie, with a smile on those kind lips that were in life so often smiling in tender sympathy with the young and the happy. But something in the perfect stillness of the attitude alarmed Mrs. James Tyndall, and she summoned her husband, who speedily discovered that his mother had passed away. The doctor says there can be no doubt that she died without awaking to pain, or any consciousness whatever of suffering. 'So He giveth His beloved sleep.' What her death is to us all I cannot yet realize. To myself I know it is the loss of a dear Christian friend and counsellor, with whose nobility of character for twenty-five years I have had the privilege to be acquainted, and by it to be stimulated, I trust, to greater zeal in God's service. For you, my beloved young friends, the children of her class, it is the loss of the faithful shepherd who has cared for you these many years, and led you along and brought you to be folded and sheltered by the Great Shepherd of the sheep. May this event teach you, as she would wish it to teach you, to trust in no arm of flesh, however strong—to feel that your difficulties must be

met by God's aid alone, that you may, when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, receive, as your beloved teacher has already done, 'a crown of glory that fadeth not away.'"

From all parts of the chapel, on that peaceful Sabbath morning, there arose at this allusion the sounds of sobbing and weeping. There were more than fifty present who, in the twenty years of Mrs. Tyndall's later Sunday-school work, had been amongst her scholars. Many of these were the mothers of the young girls whom she had last taught, and they all, parents and children, were in tears together.

"Let us proceed," said the minister, "with all due reverence and earnestness to the worship of God, by singing to His praise. I have chosen a hymn which you know to be one of her favourites—she asked me for it two years ago when her youngest son was drowned:—

> 'Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,
> Lead Thou me on.'"

But even the choir almost broke down, and few of the large congregation could join in that last verse, so touchingly applicable to her whose morning had indeed been glorious:—

> "So long Thy power hath blessed me, sure it still
> Will lead me on
> O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
> The night is gone.
> And with the morn those angel faces smile,
> Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile."

The Flower of the Grassmarket sat as if crushed on this her eighteenth birthday morning. The angel of death had swept by, and the cold rush of his wings had bent her spirit like a bruised reed. There had been sunshine at Rose Villa a few hours ago, loving congratulations from her fond uncle and aunt, and kindly wishes from the servants. Jessie had come gaily, in her strength and happiness, to the house of

God, to offer Him the praise of her lips and the renewed vows of her heart. In the spirit of David she had come, when he sang, "Serve the Lord with gladness, and come before His presence with singing; enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise."

She had anticipated the kindly smile and voice of her beloved teacher as she gave her a birthday blessing, and behold, the whole scene was changed; for it had come to pass "that the daughters of music were brought low," for "the silver cord was loosed, the golden bowl was broken."

Mr. Humphries in his pulpit preached, not the sermon he had prepared for that morning, but a faithful loving discourse to his sorrowing congregation from the text, "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." But the "light" and the "gladness" were not for Jessie that morning. Solemnly, resolutely, while she bade adieu in her heart to the aged teacher whom she had so tenderly loved, whose teachings she would never again listen to, whilst she felt her childhood vanish from her like a dream; she groped in the dark, with strong crying and tears, towards the new life of her womanhood. To deep, earnest natures, these hours of intense feeling must come. They are not to be shirked or resisted, but plunged into boldly with resolute will; only some are happily conscious that through the waves and the billows which sweep over their souls, God's everlasting arms are underneath, while others, refusing His almighty strength, in their puny pride, suffer buffeting and shipwreck. Jessie talked but little of her trouble, yet she felt much. It was the first death that had struck into her heart since the old days in Edinburgh, when her "dear auld Biddy," as she still called her, had her golden sunset. For this other dear aged friend death had been a Sabbath sunrise. And between these

solemn times of parting, Jessie's own circumstances had changed from penury to affluence, from neglect to tenderest care. Yet, next to Mrs. Tyndall, she thought most of "auld Biddy" that day, and for many days to come. The little china shepherd, always kept on her mantel-shelf amongst many choice ornaments, recalled the dear old Irishwoman; just as a beautiful illumination of the text, "I am the Good Shepherd," Mrs. Tyndall's own exquisite handiwork, and given to her on her seventeenth birthday by that dear lady, reminded her of her cultivated friend. But she was glad of the connection between the flower-wreathed words and the little image, for she felt strongly how both of these dear ones, in God's providence, had been amongst her teachers; how each had drawn her more closely to the great God, the never-failing Friend; how both had been able to make her desire to obtain more and more of that "wisdom which is the principal thing."

The day of the funeral, Jessie, with her fellow-scholars, stood around Mrs. Tyndall's open grave, and together they sang the hymn with which their beloved teacher had always closed their happy afternoons in her class-room:—

"Sun of my soul, thou Saviour dear."

Jessie held in her hands a wreath of pink and white lilies placed alternately, and a single magnolia; for these were her teacher's favourite flowers; the others had brought pale roses, clematis, jessamine, mignonette, and other lovely blossoms.

"Oh! Jessie," said one of them to her afterwards, "you remembered her taste exactly, I wish I had. 'Consider the lilies.' Do you recollect that lesson, Jessie?"

"Indeed I do."

"What splendid flowers she brought to the class that afternoon. Ah! Jessie, we shall never get a teacher like her again."

"Never; and it will be necessary for us all to teach now, to help the school to bear her loss. We cannot bear to be taught by any one else."

"Are you going to teach?"

"Yes, and you will too, Amy. Don't you think that the sore grief we feel would be a mockery to her memory unless it bore fruit—unless it will make us all try to do some of her world's work, and to do it faithfully?"

In this spirit Jessie asked for a class and began to teach, and so successfully that the girls soon grew really attached to her, and were ready to be influenced by her. She did not imitate Mrs. Tyndall's mode of teaching, she was too original in her own character to be a mere copyist; but she adopted many of the plans of that dear lady; she remembered much of her advice, she tried to be a lively teacher, and to make pictures for the eyes of her children's minds.

For she knew that, as Mrs. Tyndall said, there is an empty picture-gallery given amongst the number of his mental rooms to every human being who possesses the blessing of sight; and the filling of this gallery begins in very early childhood. But some rude pictures which pleased the immature taste are unhung and superseded by others as the years roll on, whilst there are pictures, some beautiful, some hideous, which, once hung, can never be unfastened from the walls. And there are ugly pictures which have their use, because they stimulate us to noble efforts in order that such painful scenes may not mar the galleries of others. And there are some "gems" which gladden our eyes whenever we gaze at them. Often when her girls came home from a holiday by sea, or lake, or mountain, or farm, or city, Mrs. Tyndall would ask them for one of their new pictures, when they would proceed to give her, in a few descriptive words, some scene in which they had especially

delighted. By such mental training she sharpened her children's wits and improved their education.

The Flower of the Grassmarket had received all her instruction at home. Mr. Burnard himself had taught her the higher branches of arithmetic and the rudiments of algebra, for which Annie had declared herself unequal. Together, aunt and niece studied English grammar and literature; together they read the best histories of the old empires and the new; and masters were brought to perfect what Annie had begun in French, German, and Latin. Music, Jessie's favourite study and amusement, was learned and practised diligently; for knowledge and delight went hand in hand. She was now able to render with delicate taste and exquisite expression many of the masterpieces of this glorious art. Neither Edward nor Annie Burnard cared for dashing, showy playing; they preferred that their niece should aim at rendering a piece as the composer himself might desire that it should be rendered.

"You look very grave, my Jessie," said Annie one day to her, just three months after Mrs. Tyndall's death. "I have lost my merry skylark ever singing, for a sweet nightingale whose song is only in the night."

"Auntie, I feel years older than I did three months ago."

"Very likely, dear one; you will feel younger again by-and-by."

"Shall I, auntie?"

"Yes; buoyancy will revive after a while. I feel as young myself at thirty-eight as I did at eighteen, only more experienced in men and things."

"How strange!" said Jessie.

"Not so strange if we look into it a little, Jessie," said Annie Burnard. "At about eighteen—sometimes a little younger, sometimes a little older—a woman first awakes to the burdens and responsibilities and duties of her woman-

hood; and she often trembles, especially if she be conscientious, at their magnitude. For you know how fear always magnifies that which we dread. But as we grow older and come close to these immense difficulties, they dwindle curiously in size, and by meeting one at a time, and treating with it singly, we are able to overcome them all. Another thing, dearest Jessie, is, that the longer we trust God the more our confidence in Him increases, and we feel so certain of His help that our weakness no longer terrifies us."

"If that is so, auntie, the older Christians are, the happier they will be."

"I do indeed think so," said Annie; "but you must remember, Jessie, that the amount of their sorrows and trials must naturally increase also, and may in some desponding temperaments overcloud the trust."

"I know people—I mean Christian people—often seem sadder when they are old," said Jessie.

"Perhaps," said Annie, smiling sweetly, "they forget to trust, my Jessie."

"And precious Mrs. Tyndall and my dear 'auld Biddy, prove your words, auntie; and I am sure all of you, Uncle and Aunt Duncan and dear Miss Duncan, and my best loved uncle, and you, my auntie, do so too," said Jessie, kissing her.

CHAPTER XXX.

A REVELATION.

THE natives came sometimes to the mission station to ask help for some wandering white man who had fallen ill on his way to the diamond fields. One evening, about three years after Frank's arrival, a black Christian named Peter arrived breathlessly, and announced that a white woman, whom they had picked up on the road and brought into his hut some few hours before, apparently abandoned by her party, was dying. He begged that Mr. Matthews or Mr. Drew would come with him at once. The elder missionary, being busily engaged, requested Frank to go for him. Frank was by this time master of the native language, so far as to preach in it fluently and read and write with tolerable correctness.

Mr. Matthews's health had somewhat improved since Frank joined him, but he was now meditating a visit to England in order to become fully re-established, and he felt that he could safely trust the station in the hands of his able young coadjutor.

When Frank arrived at Peter's hut, he found the stranger, a woman about forty years of age, alarmingly ill. Mr. Matthews had studied medicine, and Frank had obtained from him many valuable hints and much information respecting the treatment of disease. He administered the medicine which he had brought, and after a while the patient, who had been much excited and had thrown herself wildly about, sank into a deep sleep.

"We must move her from here to the station as soon as she is better," said Frank, as he watched beside her; and

as he watched he busied himself with her probable history. Frank feared it was not a happy one. She was very worn and emaciated, and her face bore unmistakable traces of both penury and dissipation. She was of a firm build and somewhat graceful form, and her features were good. Why was it that, as he gazed more and more earnestly, he became unpleasantly reminded of some one else whom he had seen and known somewhere, between whom and this stranger there was an unaccountable resemblance?

He could not leave her to die, unattended and alone, so he watched beside her through the night, while Peter and his wife and children slept around them.

Towards morning the sleeper opened her weary eyes: they were blue eyes; but, oh! so bloodshot and heavy. She demanded something to drink. Frank brought water, and she drank eagerly.

"You are better?" asked the young missionary, kindly; but a fierce frown answered him.

"I did not want to get better," she said. "I wish no one had troubled themselves about me, I had far rather die."

"You say so," said Frank, gently as before, "because you are ill and suffering; when you are well you will feel how precious a thing life is."

She laughed a low, mocking laugh. "I want to die most of all when I *am* well," she said; "I am weary of my life."

"Will you try to sleep again?" said Frank. "We will not disturb the sleepers around us."

"Sleep! I cannot sleep, I am wide awake; but I will talk quietly," she said, turning herself on the mats on which Peter's wife had laid her. "Who are you that tells me to go to sleep?"

"I am a missionary," said Frank. "Our station is not

far off; I will send for a mattress and have you carried there soon, it will be more comfortable for you."

"Let me die in this hut," she said, bitterly; "I don't want comfort, I only want to die."

"Are you so sure, then," said Frank, pointedly, "of being happy after death?"

She looked at him almost angrily. "Young man," she said, "how dare you ask me such a question? What business of yours is my life or my death, my happiness or my misery?"

"A faithful servant is concerned in his Master's business," replied Frank. "As a servant of Christ I have a right to ask you that question from my Master, and I repeat it, are you sure of being happy when you die? And I pray God that you may never be able to rest in your soul till you can answer it in peace."

"You are bold, young sir," she said. "Who are you?"

"A missionary," he repeated.

"Yes, you told me that; but what is your name?"

"Frank Drew," he replied.

"You are not American?"

"Oh, no; an Englishman."

"I knew by your pronunciation. From what part?"

"Somerleigh."

"Somerleigh," she echoed. And either it was Frank's fancy, or else in the dim light of the hut he saw her tremble, and her cheek flush visibly. Was this a Somerleigh woman? Had he ever possibly seen her there, and so had a dim, indistinct recollection of her?

"You know Somerleigh?" he asked.

"Oh no; I have never been there." The tone had altered from one of extreme interest to complete apathy. Frank began to believe himself mistaken in supposing she had been interested.

"May I ask your name now?" he said, pleasantly.

"Jane Davison."

"And you come from—?"

"The North of England. But I have been in America some years."

"And your husband, was he in the party to the diamond fields? You did not come alone?"

"My husband!"—she either sneered or smiled—"yes, he was."

"And he left you on the road to die?"

"Yes, but I have nothing to complain of. I wished them to leave me. I came to Africa," she said, presently, "in a mad freak, Mr. Drew, for I thought I might find a diamond that would put me above the reach of all poverty—that would make me, if not a millionaire, at least rich and respectable. I came as a gamester comes to the gaming-table, his all in his hand. My life was my all, and I have lost."

"I advise you to continue to be a treasure-seeker," said Frank; and in his heart there was a yearning Christian longing that this poor outcast might not have had her journey in vain. "There are more valuable riches than all the diamonds of Africa."

"I know what you mean," she responded. "I am not an ignorant woman. You want to preach to me the cant of your profession about the pearl of great price."

"I do not want to preach at all, I want you to seek it."

She was silent after that. Only when, a few hours later, Frank again suggested her removal to the mission-house, she persistently refused. All she asked, she said, was to be allowed to die where she was.

"Die! I hope you may get better," said Frank, cheerily; "and you are more likely to do so there than here."

"I will not be moved," she said.

So all Frank Drew could do to add to her comfort was to persuade Peter and his family to give up the hut to her sole use, and to arrange that two or three women of the village should minister to her wants.

Frank brought both Mr. and Mrs. Matthews to see the sick woman, but she seemed disinclined to talk to or accept a favour from any one but himself. She had inquired anxiously where the other missionaries came from, and being told London, she quietly abandoned all further interest in them. Spite of the temporary improvement for a few hours, it was not difficult for any one at all experienced in sickness to see that she grew gradually worse, and each day inspired Frank with greater anxiety lest she should die without hope. He spent much time with her, going to her every morning and afternoon, and sitting many whole nights beside her.

"You said your home was in Somerleigh," she remarked one day. "Do you know many people there?"

"A good many," said Frank. "Is there anybody you know there whom you would like to inquire about?" for he saw an unsatisfied longing and craving in the eyes that so narrowly watched him.

"The people I knew about were called Burnard," she said, with carelessness, which Frank could not help suspecting was assumed.

"Burnard!" It was his turn now to be surprised. "Oh, yes, I know them well; Mr. and Mrs. Burnard are amongst my very kindest friends. I owe it to Mrs. Burnard that I am a missionary at all."

"Have they any children?" asked the woman, quietly reading Frank's face.

Frank felt himself colour as he answered—

"No; but a niece, whom they have adopted as a daughter."

"And her parents?" asked the woman. "Do they live at Somerleigh?"

"No, I think they are dead." But even as Frank spoke a great horror seized him, for he could not remember to have ever heard anything about either her father or mother. Yet it seemed an insult to that pure, lovely girl to entertain it for a moment. And yet, and yet—why were the outlines of brow and chin so similar? Frank hated himself, in a foolish accession of admiration for Jessie, for allowing himself to think that there was one whit of resemblance. Yet, all the same, the whit of resemblance *was* there, was more than a little, and he knew it.

"How long ago did her parents die?" asked the woman.

"I do not know; but Mr. and Mrs. Burnard fetched her from Scotland, from Edinburgh it was, just exactly ten years ago."

"Ten years, that is a long time," said the woman. "Is she a pretty girl?"

"She has very beautiful blue eyes," said Frank, "and a great deal of wavy flaxen hair, and a very sweet face. Perhaps one would hardly call her pretty so much as pleasant-looking."

"And Mr. Burnard, does he look old yet?"

"Old! Oh, no, he is in the prime of life; not more than fifty, I suppose. I have their photographs; would you like to see them?"

"Yes, I shouldn't mind." And once more the careless tone was altogether at variance with the eager eyes.

"You will let me read to you now?" Frank said.

"Yes, if you wish it. You are very kind to me, Frank Drew."

It was her first acknowledgment of kindness, and Frank hailed it with pleasure. Gratitude to God might follow gratitude to man. He read to her the fourteenth

chapter of John, and prayed a few short petitions beside her.

"Bring those likenesses," she said, as he left.

And in the afternoon he took them. Edward and Annie Burnard's had been given to him just before he left England, together with a childish one of Jessie. But recently, in one of those regular delightful letters that came by every mail to cheer the missionary in his toil, Annie had enclosed for him one newly taken of Jessie.

"She is quite a woman now," Frank had said, as he looked at it, and traced the graces of mind and person in the sweet face. And he had felt a pang of quite uncalled-for envy against the happy folks of Somerleigh, who were privileged to see her every day, who might talk to her, or ride with her in 'busses, and tramway-cars, and railway trains, while he— Frank, like other young missionaries, was but mortal after all.

He was curious now to see the effect of these *cartes* on Jane Davison. She looked at them all with extreme attention, but lingered longest on that of Edward Burnard.

"I knew him when he was a boy," she said.

"What, at Revelstone?" he asked.

She stared in surprise. "You know all about them."

"I know where Mr. Burnard was born, certainly, and I have heard a few particulars of his family. I know that his parents have been dead for many years, and several of his brothers."

"Ah! does Jessie ever talk of her mother?"

"Jessie!" exclaimed Frank; "who told you Miss Burnard's name?"

"Why should I not know it, Mr. Drew?" she asked, desperately, "for I am Effie Burnard, and her mother." She turned away from him as she spoke, and hid her face.

And Frank hid his too—struggling, but in vain, against

" He was curious now to see the effect of these *cartes* on Jane Davison. She looked at them all with extreme attention, but lingered longest on that of Edward Burnard." *Page* 316.

the tears that would come. Oh! the bitterness of those moments. Had Jessie—hitherto to him the very impersonation of purity and innocence—a birth of infamy, a childhood of shame? "Honest though poor"—this had been his mother's boast for her children; and was Jessie's name dishonoured, and her very existence a disgrace? Was the fair flower which had bloomed so sweetly but a blighted blossom? First, in this hour, by the sting which this knowledge left in him, Frank Drew, of honest parentage, learnt that with all his heart, with all the depth of feeling which had but been growing stronger during these three years of exile, he loved Jessie Burnard. And his proud nature writhed and groaned in the torment of this double discovery. He could not bear to remain in the presence of this wretched woman. He gathered up the photographs, called one of the native women to watch by her, and strode home, where he shut himself up in his own room to combat the truth, which no fighting, wrestle as he would, could force out of existence.

Jessie was henceforth dead to him. He said it again and again, and each time with less stout heart, less accurate utterance, more bated breath. His wife's name, the name of the mother of his children, should be untarnished. He would sooner never marry at all than that the finger of scorn should be pointed at her with any show of reason. Jessie was lost to him. And yet, the mere idea of her being found by any one else was agony still more stubborn.

At what moment the light from heaven broke upon his meditations on this most painful subject, he could not have told. But dimly at first, and then clearly, he saw the whole matter in quite another aspect. Jessie's purity was not tainted by her parents' sin. Rash, vain man that he was; how far superior to him in his boastfulness were the meekness and gentleness of the sweet woman whom he loved.

Jessie's own goodness would have sufficed to found an order of hereditary nobility.

> "'Tis only noble to be good;
> Kind hearts are more than coronets,
> And simple faith than Norman blood."

And in this sudden revulsion of feeling, when he realized how this pride of his in his own superiority was that very quality which Christ abhors, his thoughts turned tenderly to the outcast woman in the hut—*Jessie's mother*. As such, she was dear to him, and for his darling's sake he would never cease to watch, and hope, and pray that peace might come to that weary sin-sick soul and fainting body. As he told himself he must expect, she received him very coldly.

"Why have you come again? You preach the words of your professed Master," she said, ironically, "but you act as you like; I am sick of religious people; you scorned me, you loathed me in your own sanctity."

"I am ashamed of my conduct," said Frank, straightforwardly; "it was altogether unworthy of Him whom, as you say, I profess to serve. But I will be honest with you, Effie Burnard. For years, ever since her earliest girlhood, unknown to myself I have loved your child. By the horror with which your words inspired me I saw this truth, which I had never put into form before, and for a while my feelings overmastered me. You must forgive me," he said, penitently, "and not put to the account of religion a man's false pride, which Christianity, I hope, will teach me to conquer."

She eyed him narrowly as he spoke.

"I have many more questions to ask," she said, in a different tone; "will you answer them?"

"Certainly."

"I am dying;" she paused, but Frank could not contradict her.

"Death, which I have sought many times rashly, daring

my God, is coming gradually nearer to me, here, amongst these poor black people, who are all so kind to me. And I have met with you here, Frank Drew, who can do all that I now feel I should like to have done. It is mysterious, very. Do you know my story?"

"No, not a word."

She gave him an outline of her early days, but stopped abruptly, as she had done in her letter to her brother, before the period of Jessie's birth.

"And Jessie?" Frank questioned when she paused.

"Ask me nothing about her, for I will never divulge any particulars of those miserable years; their secret shall be buried with me. Only one thing, Frank Drew, I will tell you—I could have never led the career I did if it hadn't been for the drink. A woman who takes to drink when she is in trouble is lost. It is true I went from my home, deceived by that wretch, Maxted, in my self-will, for passion alone leads a woman far astray; but passion and drink together are absolute ruin." She shuddered, then asked more quietly, "Does Jessie drink, does she trifle with the wine?"

"Oh, no," answered Frank, "she is a pledged abstainer, I know."

"Then she will never fall as low as I have fallen."

"God forbid," said Frank, involuntarily.

"Yes, God forbid," echoed the mother; "I remember now she used to prate to me of her Band of Hope; she must thank Miss Lorimer for her safety."

"Miss Lorimer?" queried Frank.

"Her teacher in the Edinburgh Sunday-school," answered Effie Burnard. "And Edward, does he drink? it has been a curse in our family."

"Yes, he occasionally takes a glass of wine, but there is very little intoxicating drink used in his house."

"Some people would go on drinking," said Effie, bitterly, "if their children were drowning in the liquor before their eyes."

"Not Mr. Burnard," rejoined Frank; "you lay a great stress on the evil of this habit."

"And you do not. If you had felt as I have felt, that it hedged me around in the haunts of vice, and built up a high wall of separation between me and those whom I once loved—if you had felt as I have, that character, respectability, and all hope of retrieving either were swallowed up by it—you would understand the curse that drink is to the drunkard. As you wish to keep yourself respectable and respected, Mr. Drew, have nothing to do with it."

"I never will," said Frank. "I never have. I, too, have been injured by it in my childhood; and I, too, am pledged against it."

"Did your mother drink?" inquired Effie.

"No, my father; but he happily abandoned his evil habit very many years ago."

"There are two or three things which I want you to do for me," said Effie. "When I am dead, bury me decently, and write to tell Edward. Tell him that *too late* I wished I had gone back to him; too late I repented of that unkind letter; too late I would have turned over a new leaf, and begun a different life. 'But the harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not saved.'"

She spoke these words with touching mournfulness.

"The days of gleaning are not over," said Frank, earnestly. "The eleventh hour has not struck, and yet there is room. The 'pearl of great price' is still within your reach, Effie Burnard; seek it, and it is God's promise that you shall find."

She did not answer him, and for the next two days lay often unconscious for many hours together, her strength

gradually diminishing and the end drawing near. Oh, how earnestly the young missionary prayed that she might not die without seeking, and therefore finding Christ! He sat one day beside her, believing her asleep, when she opened her eyes and looked at him.

"This is the only valuable I have," she said, taking from her finger a simple enamelled mourning ring, "and it is not worth much; if it had been it would have gone long ago. But it may serve a purpose. I give it to you, Frank Drew, to remind you, and to remind Jessie, of your great kindness to me."

"It is fittest that Jessie should have it," said Frank. "I will give it to her if I am ever so happy as to see her again."

"Young girls value themselves highly sometimes, and are hard to win, Frank Drew," she said; "if it should be so with my Jessie, let this ring plead for you."

He smiled a rather sad smile of assent as he thanked her, and placed it on his little finger.

After asking for and taking some of the cool water-melon which Frank was careful to have always at hand to refresh her in the burning wasting of the fever that consumed her, she went on talking.

"I do not wish," she said, "to give utterance to a false hope, but the fear of death is strangely taken away, Frank Drew, and the beauty of Christ's work, the loveliness of His character, are present with me and in my thoughts constantly, as they never have been before. I cannot perhaps say that I have found Him, but I do desire to find. Read the story of the woman, Frank Drew—the woman 'that was a sinner.'"

And Frank read it through tenderly, gently, feeling its beauty as he had never felt it before, in the quiet of the hut, with the hot sun pouring its rays through the open

door, and the sick woman's eyes eagerly watching him, her flushed face resting on her hand.

"Alas!" she cried; and her heart was broken at last, and the tears streamed over her face like rain. "Alas! I have no alabaster box to bring Him, my Saviour and my God. I cannot thank Him as I would; but I see it now, I see it all. The pearl is of great price, yet without money, and without price, I may buy it. Oh, matchless mercy, it is wonderful!"

No doubts came to mar the perfection of that peace. Her one cry of regret was for the lost life, when she might have loved Him whom she now adored, and been so happy in that love.

"Tell Edward and Jessie that we shall meet again," she said, with her dying breath, "and thank Edward's wife from me for all that she has done for Jessie and for you."

And thus, with Frank's hand holding hers, and the "pearl of great price" hidden in her heart, the soul of the weary treasure-seeker went home. And the young missionary, to whom God had given in a heathen land this outcast fellow-countrywoman's soul for his hire, knelt and poured out his soul in praise and thanksgiving that his Jessie's poor mother was safely anchored in the haven of eternal rest.

The simple funeral, attended by all the black and white Christians of the place, speedily followed, and Frank busied himself in placing a stone over her grave, on which he caused to be engraved the following simple inscription:—

"EFFIE BURNARD.
"Born at Revelstone, England.
"Died June 18, 18—.

"Again: The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found

one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.—Matt. xiii. 45, 46.

"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. —Isa. lv. 1."

The words were in English and in the native tongue, that their blessed significance might profit both nations of men.

CHAPTER XXXI.

NEWS FROM A FAR COUNTRY.

"LETTERS from Frank, auntie; letters from Frank; and *such* thick packets, too: one for you and one for uncle. He ought to have written to me this time."

"Have you answered his last letter, Jessie?"

"No, auntie."

"Then pray don't complain of our Frank. You make the coffee, Jessie, this morning, and leave me at liberty to read."

Jessie obeyed. But after Edward and Annie Burnard had begun the perusal of their letters, they became so absorbed in them, and there fell such a silence on the trio, that Jessie began to feel an uncomfortable sensation of dread, lest some bad news were told in those thickly-written sheets. She scanned the faces of both her uncle and aunt very carefully as they read, and marked how the lines of care gathered over her uncle's brow, continued there, and then gradually melted away, while he heaved a great sigh of relief, as it seemed to Jessie, and the tears filled his eyes and then overflowed them.

Annie Burnard's face expressed at first curiosity, then astonishment—then, ah! then Jessie could no longer read her mingled thoughts.

"Uncle, I fear your coffee is cold," she ventured to say at last; "shall I pour you another cupful?"

"My dear child, I was wholly oblivious of coffee. I cannot think of anything yet but of your mother, Jessie. Come here, my child."

Jessie rose in much surprise; it was rarely, indeed, that

her uncle mentioned her mother. She came to him, and he drew her on to his knee and kissed her tenderly.

"My Jessie," said he, "there is strange news in these letters. Thank God, thank God, the prodigal child is safe in the Father's home."

And wholly unable any longer to repress his strong emotion, Edward Burnard wept, not bitterly, but abundantly, for the sting of his sister's death was swallowed up in her victory.

"My mother, uncle! Oh! will you not tell me what it all is?" pleaded Jessie, crying too, in sympathy with Edward Burnard's tears.

"Jessie," said he, "God in His wonderful providence has brought your poor wandering mother to Africa, and to Frank."

"To Frank!" she exclaimed; "my mother made herself known to him! Oh! uncle, uncle, is she alive? I thought she was dead long ago. Oh! tell me all, my poor mother!"

Jessie was trembling from head to foot in her strong excitement.

"Lie down, dear Jessie," said Annie Burnard, who had finished her letter, and was now watching them. "Calm yourself, my precious child."

And Jessie tottered from her uncle's knee to the sofa, and her aunt and uncle gathered round her, and together they shared much of the contents of Frank's letters. Much, but not all. For in the young missionary's letter to Annie Burnard was enclosed one for Jessie, to be given to her if they approved of him as a suitor for their adopted child. And in the letter to Mr. Burnard also Frank referred to his hopes, and asked permission to tell them to Jessie.

At a glance, husband and wife understood that each knew of this request of Frank's; at another glance they both wisely determined that, for the present, Jessie had enough

to think of and to bear. Her mother's death—the strange manner of it—filled her mind. Frank Drew's care of her, and the eternal hope that had beamed with mild, calm lustre at the last, solaced her grief, but that grief was sincere and deep as the girl's own nature. The little Flower of the Grassmarket, in her far-away childish days, had never any reason to bless the only parent she had ever known; but none the less Jessie had clung to her with affection, had shielded her from blame, had screened her faults, and had tried to be dutiful and gentle to her.

For many years she, like Mr. Burnard, had supposed she must be dead, and it was at once the birth of an unlooked-for comfort, and the resurrection of an old sorrow, thus to ascertain the manner and circumstances of her death. It was perfectly natural, too, that Frank should be much in Jessie's thoughts. To him her poor mother had confided a great deal of her sad history, and he had, by God's blessing, been the means of bringing peace to the restless unhappy soul within her. He had watched by her in those last days of her wandering life; in the black man's hut he had nursed her tenderly as a woman, as Jessie herself would fain have done; and Frank's hand held hers when it let go its grasp of earthly life for ever. Gratitude filled her heart for him, but a sense of disappointment was there also. It found expression at last, after she had battled with it for many days.

"Auntie, I almost wonder Frank did not write to me about my mother. Don't you think it would have been only kind of him?"

"He did write, Jessie."

"Was the letter lost, then?" she asked, growing very pale, and raising her sweet eyes inquiringly to her aunt.

"No, it is in my pocket," said Annie Burnard, very quietly.

"Oh! auntie"—the eyes were reproachful now—"why did you not give it to me? Will you not let me have it?"

"I will tell you, Jessie. Frank wished your uncle and me to decide about giving it to you at all, just at present, and we could not think it was best till you had regained your composure a little. For Frank writes to you on a very important subject, my darling."

"Of course," she said, "about my poor mother." But on her cheeks the flitting colour came and went.

"I will give you his letter, Jessie; it is not all about your mother." Annie Burnard rose, put the sealed envelope into Jessie's hands, kissed her, and left her to herself. Jessie looked at the writing, glanced at the seal, turned it once or twice nervously, opened it and read. It was the outpouring of an honest, a manly, and an affectionate nature. He did not hide from her the privations which she must endure if she consented to become his wife. He told her some few interesting particulars about her mother, but said little of the care he had taken of her. He only told her how deep was his satisfaction at being able to minister to the comfort of Jessie's mother. Tenderly and lightly he touched upon the manner in which the strong consciousness of his great love for her had dawned upon him. And he added how her dear blue eyes were haunting him ever, watching him night and day, constantly before him in his waking moments, looking at him in his dreams, gazing down upon him from distant stars; and he entreated her to let them answer yes. The old French song, he said, was often on his lips.

> "Ces deux bleus yeux
> Ils ravissent mon cœur."

But Frank did not mention her mother's ring, for he wished to win her by his own love, and not by any talisman, however powerful.

The blue eyes read through every word, and then she began the letter again, and read it all a second time.

"I cannot leave them," she said, softly; "I do not love him well enough."

A day or two passed. Neither Edward nor Annie Burnard had asked for the confidence Jessie did not volunteer. But her aunt said to her at last,—

"The Cape mail goes out to-morrow, Jessie; we are writing to Frank to-day. Have you written?"

"Auntie," said Jessie, and her eyes were sad as she looked at Annie Burnard, "thank him, please, for all he did for my mother, for I *cannot* write to him myself."

"You must answer him some time, Jessie; that is but common kindness and courtesy to any man."

"Yes, auntie; but not this mail. Tell him, please, I cannot write now, but I will do so by the next."

"You do not love him, Jessie?"

"I do not love him well enough to leave you, auntie," she said, her voice trembling, her blue eyes overflowing. "You do not wish me to go?"

"Wish you to go! Oh, Jessie!" said Annie, reproachfully. "Why it would almost break our hearts to think of parting from our child. Nothing could reconcile us to it, but our being sure that you so loved Frank as not to be able to be happy without him."

"Auntie, will you leave it all. I cannot think—I do not know what I mean yet. Only tell him I will write a letter by the next mail."

The love of man for woman partakes of the nature of Divine love in this—that it is given unsought, and that it first enkindles the love which it satisfies. The woman, like the believing soul, loves because she is first beloved; the depth of love manifested on the one hand, begets an answering love, a grateful love in return. This idea is

carried out in the figure of the Church as the bride of Christ; and in the injunction of the Apostle Paul, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for it," the parallel is continued.

Although Jessie, when she received his letter telling her of his affection for her, had really not loved Frank in the particular way in which he wished her to love him, but only admired and honoured and loved him as a brother, yet in that very knowledge of his attachment to her was the seed of her answering love for him, which, falling into the tender soil of her heart, took root and sprang up steadily.

"The next mail, and not a word of hope this! Oh, my Jessie! to what a fortnight of anxiety you have condemned me!" said poor Frank, as he read Annie Burnard's letter, and tried to bear the disappointment bravely. Mr. and Mrs. Matthews had gone to England in the same ship which had conveyed his first letter on the subject; they were to stay away for a year, and Frank had consequently a very busy life at the mission station, but none too busy to save him from the ill-effects of anxiety and doubt.

Jessie wrote as she had promised, but it was a timid, doubtful letter, in which she said she could not give him a final answer for some little time, if he cared to wait so long. But she must have time to think, for the idea was so new and so strange. Frank thought again of her mother's ring, which was to plead for him; but he determined to wait awhile before he used anything but his own strong love to win her. He answered her letter, and declared himself willing to wait her time, if only she would say yes to him at last.

CHAPTER XXXII.

"THY PEOPLE SHALL BE MY PEOPLE."

"NAUGHTY, naughty child," said Maggie Duncan, kissing Jessie, "you have cheated us completely. I never could have been bridesmaid, of course, but I fully intended my little Annie to have been my deputy; and now, I suppose, there will be instead a regiment of small black Sunday-school scholars drawn up in line, to scatter lotus flowers and palm branches all the way to the mission church. How funny the quaint little dears will look, their rows of little black faces and woolly heads surmounting their spotless white frocks. I wish I could see it all. Mind and tell Frank if he does not send me an account of the wedding, full, true, and particular, I shall cut him off without even a shilling; and considering the length of my small family, he cannot expect I should give him more. Why don't you persuade some enterprising newspaper firm to send a 'special' over with you, dear, to 'interview' you all, and send delightfully racy reports of the ceremonies?"

"Naughty Aunt Maggie," said Jessie, but she could not help laughing at the merry, cheerful words.

Maggie very often had to arouse the somewhat sad trio, who busied themselves in the preparations for Jessie's new life. Frank's love had conquered, and Jessie had echoed from her heart the tender words of the Moabitish maiden. She had received a letter of entreaty from Frank, that she would come out to him when the Matthewses returned. He could not, he said, rightly ask for a holiday to come and fetch her, as he should like to do; and though he knew it was the greatest proof of her love he could ask of her, he

trusted she would not refuse him. He would meet them at the Cape, and Mr. Matthews should solemnise the marriage on their return home. He requested that at least fifty white garments, trimmed with pink, should be brought for the best of the school-children, who would be allowed to take part in the proceedings. And Maggie had undertaken to make these, with the ready assistance of her little girl, her servants, and her machine.

Jessie had plenty of occupation for her time. Her uncle at Burnard Court, to whom Edward Burnard had written an account of their sister's death, requested a visit from his niece, and Miss Lorimer wrote from Edinburgh entreating her not to leave the country without once more having a peep at her fair northern birthplace. With equal claim, Sir William insisted that before treading on "Afric's sunny sands," "as the Bard of Avon wrote," she should come to Yelland, and bear his greetings direct to Frank.

During this their darling's round of visits, her uncle and aunt tried to imagine how they should be able to get on at Rose Villa without her. They missed her sadly in house, in garden, in chapel, in their drives, till Maggie compassionately declared that Harry and she would have to spare them one of their seven olive branches to partially fill the vacant place.

Once more the Flower of the Grassmarket stood within its precincts. She looked up at the high old houses, and she sought Fraser's Close. She sought, but she could not find it. Surely she could not be mistaken, it was most certainly on that side on which she looked. She inquired for Fraser's Close.

"Ou aye," she was answered, "it's just a' knockit doon."

The City Improvement Commissioners had doomed it, and the houses were pulled down. It was gone—gone like the old life Jessie had known in it, gone like the mother

who tenanted the room on its topmost flat. Jessie looked affectionately at the poor little children who played as she used to play within the rails of the Corn Exchange. Could she give them a treat? She scattered some goodies and nuts amongst them to relieve her mind temporarily, and watched the eager scramblers, her gentle face half sad, half smiling, and her beautiful eyes glistening with her pitiful tears.

She had intended to call on Mrs. Menzies, but the non-existence of Fraser's Close baffled her. Proceeding along the West Port, deep in thought, she came to a small shop of comestibles in the narrow street, at the door of which a woman stood, in whose upright person, delightful cleanliness, and honest face, Jessie gladly recognised her mother's landlady, and she smiled into her face and extended her hand. Mrs. Menzies looked astonished and completely at fault, the well-dressed young lady did not at first recall the barefooted child; till, gazing longer, and especially at the blue eyes with their lóng dark fringes, the eyes which had ever been the chief beauty of Jessie's face, the good creature exclaimed aloud,—

"Eh! but it's just the wee bit Flower o' the Grassmarket hersel'; an' welcome to ye, Jessie; an' ye're seeking your auld hame, and it's gane, and to think ye hae found me. Ay, but you're grown a bonnie lassie, and a winsome lassie. Come in."

And Jessie entered the little shop, and sat down, to Mrs. Menzies' intense gratification; and she told her of her approaching voyage, and the marriage that was to follow it.

"An' hae ye heard aught o' your mither, Jessie?" asked Mrs. Menzies, and another long answer had to follow that question, till she rose to take a hasty departure, fearing Miss Lorimer would have become anxious on her behalf.

"But ye'll no lave Edinbro' wi'out coming again to the Grassmarket, Jessie. There's mony a ain would be blithe to see ye, and mony that ye knew lang syne are deed and gane."

Jessie promised that she would at least see Mrs. Menzies again, and so departed. But she could not bear to leave her native city without making these poor people, amongst whom she had once lived, happy, if it were but for a few short hours. The Flower longed to shed its brightness and sweetness on its native soil; and she propounded her scheme to Miss Lorimer and to her old friend Agnes, now the betrothed wife of a young Presbyterian minister. They helped her with all possible heartiness, and a few days later, in a schoolroom, willingly lent to her for the purpose, Jessie entertained the delighted children of the Grassmarket to a bountiful supply of tea and fruits, cakes, cookies, scones, shortbread, and gingerbread. They came, some bearing such evident marks of neglect as made her heart ache for them; some with their mother's last polishing touch upon face, and hands, and clothes. And after the feast Jessie spoke to them. She did not feel that she could speak at all, until she remembered that these were her little brothers and sisters, and then, as an elder sister, who, because she had known the dear Father of them all longer than they, knew also more of His love, she told them about that love. How He had boundless stores of good and of blessing ready for them all, if they would but come and ask Him. She told them that she was one of themselves, that she used to play as they played, and feel as they felt, and be hungry sometimes, and cold sometimes, and unhappy sometimes; she narrated to them how, in the hospital, she had learnt to love Jesus from her dear nurse, Mrs. McAlpine, who was beside her at this very moment, and how, after that, she had a little secret store of happiness in all her sorrows, of which

no one could rob her. And as Jessie spoke so simply, and so much from her heart into theirs, they listened to the loving voice, and many of them were helped and comforted.

Nurse McAlpine followed Jessie about that evening as if her eyes could never be satisfied with looking at her bonnie bairn. She was no longer at the hospital, but lived at Leith, and nursed her old crippled father, who had been a pilot on the mighty deep, but was now past all labour.

When the little ones left, at seven o'clock, their elders, who had been invited, took the children's places. Several of these knew Jessie, and she went among them and grasped the horny hands of the rough men and poor toil-worn women, and they all felt better for that soft and kindly touch. She remembered some of them better than they recollected her, for she had changed so much, while they had remained so much the same, save for the older looks and the grey hair.

"Och! shure now," said the gallant old Irishman, Pat O'Sheen, who had loved and admired little Jessie from the first time her tiny bare feet had carried her in safety, a little flaxen-haired bairnie, across the Grassmarket, until the present hour, "the bud has opened into a lovely flower, intirely."

Amongst her guests was auld Sandy, the blind giant Highlander, in kilt and plaid, who played the bagpipes about the city, and made a comfortable living of his blindness and his music. How often Jessie and her little companions had followed him into Parliament Square on summer evenings, and stood beside him as he played! He knew her voice, he said, and greeted her with enthusiasm in his broad native dialect. And there were several of "ould Biddy's" Irish friends, barrow-women and pickled-fish sellers, who claimed a knowledge of her.

A few gentlemen and ladies, and two ministers, all of

them friends of the Lorimers, came to speak kind words to the gathered assembly, and to sing some glees for their amusement, after they had all partaken of a comfortable repast. But there were calls, loud and long, for the "Flower o' the Grassmarket," "our own darlint Flower," as the Irish folks called her; and timid and blushing, and looking very lovely in her unaffected bashfulness, Jessie answered their call.

She spoke a few earnest words to them. She warned them faithfully against their old enemy, whisky, which kept so many of them low and miserable, when they might be comfortable and flourishing. She asked them why they thought it necessary to take the deadly spirit to make them joyous, when they had been so happy this night without it. She told them of the misery they made for others; how, when she was a tiny lassie herself, she had dreaded, and feared, and shaken with fright because of the drunken men and women who rolled, and staggered, and fought, and cursed up and down the Grassmarket. "Oh!" she said, in her low, pleading voice, "will you not have done with the terrible whisky? will you not mind the wee bairnies, the flowers that are growing up around you now? and will you not try to make life a bonnie thing to them instead of a curse? You cannot do it of yourselves, I know that well, but God will help you to do away with the whisky, and to love Him, and to obey Him, and then you will be happy, dear friends. Good-bye."

And the words of Jessie—because they were the words of one who felt how deeply tried and tempted they were, how difficult it was for them to do rightly, how easy to sin amidst so many temptations—sank into their hearts.

Away from Scotland now, away from Somerleigh and England soon. The Matthewses came to Rose Villa to fetch their charge from the happy home of half her life.

The last fortnight of Jessie's stay at Somerleigh was so crowded with the acceptance of gifts and the saying of "good-bye," that at the end of it she looked wan and fagged, and felt weary and sad. Bertie's last grave injunction to her, as she stood surrounded by the eager group of Harry and Maggie's children, was "to please not to forget to send him a little plant of *real Cape jessamine.*"

The last embraces were over. Edward and Annie Burnard for the second time turned away from the Cape mail steamer at Southampton, and now they felt that they had given their best treasure to Africa. Jessie, weeping bitterly, watched them depart till the last trace of them was lost to view; then, turning her face southwards, she whispered softly to herself, "Henceforth, oh, dearest Frank, thy people shall be my people, as thy God is my God."

We, too, must part from our Jessie; for the days of her sitting at the feet of human teachers are over, and as she fades from our view, stepping with light, unfaltering tread into her unknown future, we see her flaxen hair flower-wreathed for her bridal, her sweet blue eyes are lifted trustfully to Frank's, and we catch the echoes of the words spoken in the mission church, which make the Flower of the Grassmarket and the young missionary for ever one.

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